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ABSTRACT

Accreditation receives much emphasis in our educational systems and it forms a significant element in both institutional and programmatic accountability and credibility. Numerous agencies and associations in addition to national institutional accrediting agencies are recognized as accrediting bodies. The accrediting bodies establish accreditation standards or essentials that guide their deliberations regarding accreditation and an educational institution's efforts in applying for accreditation. Accreditation standards apply to institutional accreditation, while accreditation essentials generally pertain to programmatic accreditation. Concern about the eligibility of vocational institutions for federal funds brought accrediting opportunities to these institutions in the 1960s. Because of the difficult questions vocational-technical education encountered with the accreditation process, a national workshop held in 1979 with participants from existing accrediting agencies and vocational educators from state agencies and local institutions was organized to develop program standards and to improve accrediting procedures for vocational programs. Although accreditation is called "voluntary," it is necessary for federal funding. The problems in accreditation--high costs and inefficient procedures--can be lessened by joint scheduling of on-site visits, development of a single self-study guide, and further research regarding the accreditation process. This paper explores the general accreditation process and its application to vocational education; it also profiles the accreditating agencies and their standards. (KC)

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Information Series No. 251

ACCREDITING OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

written by

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FOREWORD

Accrediting Occupational Training Programs explores the general accreditation process and in particular its application to vocational, technical, and occupational education. Although accreditation receives much attention from governmental and educational institutions, it has never been well understood, either by the general public or by most faculty, staff members, and students of institutions it is intended to serve.

This paper is one of ten interpretive papers produced during the fifth year of the National Center's knowledge transformation program. The review and synthesis in each topic area is intended to communicate knowledge and suggest applications. Papers in the series should be of interest to all vocational educators including teachers, administrators, federal agency personnel, and researchers.

The profession is indebted to Dr. Roland V. Stoodley, Jr., for his scholarship in preparing this paper. Dr. Stoodley is President of New Hampshire Vocational Technical College in Claremont, New Hampshire. Dr. Bob E. Childers of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Dr. James Greenan of the University of Illinois, Dr. Phares S. Nye of Wake Technical College, Dr. Peggy Stank of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Dr. James Hamilton and Dr. Robert Bhaerman of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education contributed to the development of the paper through their critical review of the manuscript. Staff on the project included Joan Blank, Dr. Ann Nunez, Dr. Judith Samuelson, and Dr. Jay Smink. Claire Brooks, Clarine Cotton, and Ruth Nunley typed the manuscript and Janet Ray served as word processor operator. Editorial assistance was provided under the supervision of Janet Kiplinger of the Field Services staff.

Robert E. Taylor
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Accreditation receives much emphasis in our educational systems and it forms a significant element in both institutional and programmatic accountability and credibility. This paper broadly outlines accreditation, and its network of national and regional agencies and commissions, and the development of vocational accreditation. Discussion of these topics and final implications, applications, and recommendations provides a basis of understanding the accreditation process for vocational-technical educators.

Numerous agencies and associations in addition to national institutional accrediting agencies are recognized as accrediting bodies. At the postsecondary level the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is the national body explicitly formed to foster and facilitate the role of those agencies which it recognizes.

The accrediting bodies establish accreditation standards (or essentials) that guide their deliberations regarding accreditation and an educational institution's efforts in applying for accreditation. Accreditation *standards* apply to institutional accreditation; accreditation *essentials* generally pertain to programmatic accreditation. Accreditation essentials concern program components rather than the institution as a whole; however, institutional accreditation is often a requirement for program accreditation.

Concern about the eligibility of vocational institutions for federal funds brought accrediting opportunities to these institutions in the 1960s. With this new dimension vocational-technical education encountered difficult questions:

1. What is included in vocational-technical education
2. How should the different settings in which programs operate be dealt with
3. What should be the involvement of the federal government
4. What should be the delineation between program and institutional considerations
5. Should additional accrediting agencies or the existing ones deal with accreditation in specialized programs

In 1979 a national workshop with participants from existing accrediting agencies and vocational educators from state agencies and local institutions was organized to develop program standards and to improve accrediting procedures for vocational programs. The workshop was sponsored by the American Vocational Association (AVA), the Council on Postsecondary Education (COPA), and the Council on Regional School Accrediting Commissions (CORSAC). Recommendations from this meeting specified roles and activities for each of these organizations in regard to the accreditation of vocational education for vocational-technical educators who may be involved with the accreditation process.

Whether the accreditation process is programmatic or institutional, it consists of three steps. The first is application, when an institution or program makes its initial (formal) request for accreditation candidacy. The second step is self-study, involving an internal review and assessment and the production of a self-study visit. During the visit a selected team of peers, representing the respective accrediting body, visits the candidate's facility to conduct a tour and review the self-study document.

Although accreditation is referred to as "voluntary and nongovernmental," it is far from voluntary for institutional survival. Most institutions attain eligibility for federal funds by holding accredited or preaccredited status with one of the accrediting bodies recognized by the Commissioner of Education.

The problems in accreditation—high costs, inefficient procedures, and others—will not lessen without the efforts of educators concerned with these inefficiencies. Recommendations for improvement of the system include:

- Joint scheduling of on-site visits
- Development of a single self-study guide
- Further research regarding the validity and reliability of the accreditation process and its components

INTRODUCTION

Accreditation has become an integral part of the educational system in the United States. The students, the consumers of the efforts of educational institutions and programs, and the federal government look upon accreditation as a measure of acceptable standards of quality. Accreditation acts as a beacon, signaling that an educational institution (or program), through a long process of self-analysis and peer evaluation, is aware of and has met minimum standards of quality. Institutions themselves rely heavily on the process in determining acceptability of transfer credits. Vocational, technical, and occupational institutions especially regard accreditation—both institutional and programmatic—as having utmost importance and as a significant element in accountability, professionalism, and credibility.

Yet with all the emphasis placed on accreditation, it has never been well understood, either by the general public or by most faculty, staff members, and students of institutions it is intended to serve. The professionals and volunteers who have been actively involved in accreditation have been so busy making the process work that they have had little if any time to spend educating others as to the values and limitations of accreditation (Young 1975).

Not only does the granting of accreditation ensure a standard of quality to the general public as well as present and potential consumers, but the process also by its very nature requires an institution or program to become aware of its chief objectives and basic philosophy and the process by which it achieves them. It requires an institution or program to strive continally to improve its current level of quality.

Accreditation acts both as a "seal of approval" and as a motivator toward excellence. It is virtually the lifeblood of any successful vocational, technical, or occupational program or institution that hopes to continue providing services and to maintain a reputation for quality.

Purpose

There is little in the literature to illustrate that very much has been done regarding accreditation in vocational-technical education at either the institutional or programmatic level. In order to implement the accreditation process properly, it is necessary for those involved to understand fully the procedures, their importance, their development, and what they accomplish. Undoubtedly, nearly all educators are at one point in their careers involved in an accreditation process. (If properly conducted an institution or program undergoing accreditation would in some respect involve every individual it employed). However, no one person will suddenly be required to know all the intricacies of accreditation. Yet an understanding of the dynamics of the entire process may make easier the completion of tasks associated with accreditation.

This paper provides the reader with a broad concept of the accreditation process concerning vocational, technical, and occupational education as we know it today. It defines key accreditation terminology, presents an overview of accreditation and its network of national and regional agencies and commissions, and outlines the emergence of vocational accreditation.

In describing the accreditation process, a sampling of materials developed by various regional, national, and program accrediting agencies is used. Illustrations have been developed to explain the scope of accreditation and to summarize certain aspects of the accreditation process. The self-study and on-site visit phases of accreditation are discussed to enable vocational-technical educators to approach the accreditation issue with less fear.

The intention is not to give the reader a cookbook approach to all accreditation, since each accrediting agency has its own format, style, standards (essentials), and varied requirements. For specific accreditation materials, individuals are urged to contact the respective agencies.

Before delving further in this text, the reader is encouraged to become familiar with the terms in Appendix A and to refer to those that may need clarification later. These definitions have been developed by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) in an effort to foster consistency and common understanding in the use of accreditation terminology (COPA 1980, p. 4).

OVERVIEW OF ACCREDITING BODIES

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NE), the first regional association, was founded in 1885. Its purpose then was "the advancement of the cause of liberal education by the promotion of interests common to both colleges and preparatory schools" (New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools 1957). Table 1 lists the dates of establishment of other regional associations, as well as other pertinent data. The geographical makeup of the regional associations is indicated in figure 1. Today, accreditation is a requirement for membership in all the regional associations.

Postsecondary Accrediting Agencies and Their Commissions

Each regional accrediting agency is divided into commissions. The commissions have the responsibility of institutional accreditation and are organized on the basis of the goals and the program durations of the institutions they serve. The nine postsecondary accrediting commissions of the six regional associations are as follows:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (MSA)

  Commission of Higher Education (CHE)

- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NE)

  Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CHE)
  Commission on Vocational, Technical, Career Institutions (CVTC)

- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)

  Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CHE)

- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NWA)

  Commission of Colleges (COC)

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SA)

  Commission of Colleges (CC)
  Commission on Occupational Education Institutions (COEI)

- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

  Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSUC)
  Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (CJC)

TABLE 1

ACCREDITATION: INSTITUTIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

	Accrediting Associations & Commissions								
Association	MSA	NE	NE	NCA	NWA	SA	SA	WASC	WASC
Commission	CHE	CHE	CVTC	CIHE	COC	CC	COEI	ACSCU	CIC
Accreditation classification									
Candidate Status									
Maximum term (years)	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	6	2
Initial accreditation									
Maximum term (years)	5	5	5	[a]	5	5	[b]	[c]	[d]
Continuing accreditation									
Not to exceed (years)	10	10	10	[a]	10	10	[b]	[c]	[d]
Number of accredited institutions (1980)									
Fully accredited	468	184	88	841	138	706	191	127	124
Candidate institutions	29	14	—	—	15	—	52	14	6
Year association established	1887	1885	1885	1895	1917	1895	1895	1948	1948
Commission	1919	1952	1970	1910	1923	1917	1968	1962	1962
Recent name change	—	1903	1975	1970	—	1961	1971	1962	1962

[a]There is no fixed term of accreditation status but merely a continuing relationship between an institution and the commission which can be changed at any time by either party.

[b]Accreditation is granted for a period of one year with subsequent reaffirmation within two, three, four, or five years. Each school must substantiate its accreditation annually by a report reflecting the school's current status.

[c]Accreditation status is without time limit but is subject to review.

[d]Accreditation status indicates that an institution is offering its students the educational opportunities implied in its objectives (no term in years given).

[e]The Western Association of Schools and Colleges was organized in 1962, assuming the accrediting functions previously performed (since 1948) by the Western College Association.

SOURCE: Stoodley 1981.

Figure 1. Geographic Makeup of Regional Accrediting Associations

With the exception of NE and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SA), vocational-technical programs are accredited as part of the secondary institution accreditation process. The Commission on Occupational Education Institutions of the SA accredits noncollegiate and nondegree institutions that can be secondary as well as postsecondary. However, this commission cannot accredit a secondary school that awards a high school diploma. The Commission on Vocational, Technical, and Career Institutions (CVTC) of the NE accredits both degree and nondegree programs, as well as secondary and postsecondary institutions. The other four accrediting associations include vocational, technical, and occupational institutions within the framework of their existing commissions. Table 2 indicates the scope of accreditation of the various commissions as it pertains to specific institutions, and table 3 gives the scope of accreditation by commission and state.

An institutional candidate for accreditation with the SA must meet specific eligibility requirements:

1. Be a legally constituted educational institution
2. Have a clear emphasis on occupational education as the core of instruction
3. Be a noncollegiate institution of occupational education
4. Be located within the identified boundaries of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
5. Have undergone a preliminary review by a representative of the commission to determine that there is reasonable expectation of accreditation

Institutions demonstrating progress toward becoming accredited may remain in candidate status for a period not to exceed three years.

Although each regional accrediting agency states its purpose in varying terminology, the consensus definition is as follows:

> *Institutional Accreditation*—Institutional or regional accreditation takes as its purview an entire institution in an endeavor to maintain standards for the overall operations of the institution without identifying the quality of any one of its parts. Although there are exceptions, such type of accreditation has been conducted by assocations of institutions based on a regional membership; and the committees responsible for the conduct of this activity invariably have been comprised of representatives of institutions already accredited. (Selden 1976)

National Institutional Accrediting Agencies

In addition to the nine postsecondary accrediting commissions of the six regional accrediting associations, there are four national institutional accrediting agencies. These four, as illustrated in table 4, differ from the regional agencies in that they are nationwide in scope. The national agencies grant accreditation to the total institution, yet are also concerned with specialized fields within the institution. These accrediting agencies are recognized by and are members of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. They are also listed as nationally recognized accrediting agencies by the United States Office of Education.

TABLE 2

SCOPE OF INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION BY COMMISSION

	Association	MSA	NE	NE	NCA	NWA	SA	SA	WASC	WASC
	Commission	CHE	CHE	CVTC	CIHE	COC	CC	COEI	ACSCU	CIC
Scope of accreditation Granting accreditation to eligible institutions that offer the following: postsecondary programs at least one academic year in length		X		X	X	X				
Degrees only			X				X			
Certificate/diploma and/or associate degree level and are public, private, nonprofit and proprietary				a c						
One or more degree programs at least one year in length		X		X			X			
Nondegree occupational education				X				b		
One or more programs, at least one academic year beyond the first two years of college or equivalent									X	
Postsecondary certificates, diplomas, or associate degrees				X						X

[a]Includes secondary institutions or centers offering vocational, technical and career programs.

[b]Includes secondary, occupational institutions.

[c]According to available research the New England Associate Commission on Vocational, Technical, Career Institutions is the only regional accrediting agency that indicates accreditation of proprietary institutions.

SOURCE: Stoodley 1981.

TABLE 3

SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION BY COMMISSION AND STATE

Commissions and states									
Association	MSA	NE	NE	NCA	NWA	SA	SA	WASC	WASC
Commission	CHE	CHE	CVTC	CIHE	COC	CC	COEI	ACSCU	CIC
	NY PA NJ MD DE DC PR VI CZ Few European Countries Other	CT ME MA NH RI VT Other	CT ME MA NH RI VT Other	AR AZ CO IL IN IA KS MI MN MO NE NM ND OH OK SD WV WI WY	AK ID MT NV OR UT WA	AL FL GA KY LA MS NC SC TN TX VA	AL FL GA KY LA MS NC SC TN TX VA	CA HI GU Others	CA HI GU Others

SOURCE: Stoodley, 1981.

Recognized Accrediting Agencies

There exists a multitude of agencies, associations, and other accrediting bodies responsible for recognizing quality education. But what control is there over these bodies? Who or what accredits the accreditors? The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is the national body developed explicity to oversee postsecondary accreditation.

COPA, like the accrediting agencies, is a nongovernmental organization that works to foster and facilitate the role of accrediting agencies in promoting and ensuring the quality and diversity of American postsecondary education. It recognizes, coordinates, and periodically reviews the work of its member accrediting agencies and their activities.

With the creation of COPA, postsecondary education has a national coordinating organization designed to help maintain the balance of the total accreditation process, to monitor its relationship to government interests, and to increase the awareness and understanding of the various publics concerned with the soundness of institutions and their programs.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation seeks to accomplish the following major objectives:

1. Recognize associations that accredit institutions and programs of postsecondary education.

2. Provide national leadership and understanding in speaking for postsecondary accreditation by—

   a. cultivating a broad understanding of accreditation;
   b. serving as a spokesman for accreditation at the national level; and
   c. interacting with interested parties such as educational institutions, foundations, government agencies, and other organizations and groups on matters of accreditation.

3. Provide services to the accrediting associations, postsecondary educational institutions, and the public by—

   a. assisting and improving the general accrediting process, as well as the policies and practices of recognized accrediting associations;
   b. facilitating coordination among accrediting associations;
   c. encouraging, sponsoring, and conducting research related to the understanding and improvement of accreditation;
   d. publishing research findings and other information on accreditation (including an annual list of recognized accrediting associations and a list of institutions and educational programs accredited by recognized associations); and
   e. engaging in such other activities as may be desirable in serving the colleges and universities, the accrediting associations, and the public. (Council on Postsecondary Education 1982)

As of this writing, COPA recognizes fifty-two accrediting agencies, which in turn represent approximately 4,100 institutions of postsecondary education. A list of the recognized accrediting agencies can be found in Appendix B.

TABLE 4

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITING AGENCIES LISTED BY THE UNITED STATES OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Accrediting body	Year established	Scope of accreditation	Geographic scope	Number of accredited institutions (1980)
American Association of Bible Colleges 3155 North College Street Fayetteville, Arkansas 71701	1947	Grants institutional accreditation to professional or special-purpose colleges commonly known as Bible Colleges; programs within these institutions may vary from two to five years in length	United States & Canada	74 accredited institutions 10 candidate institutions 34 applicant institutions
Association of Independent Schools and Colleges 1730 M Street, NW Washington, DC 10036	1952	Grants institutional accreditation to private business schools, junior colleges of business, and senior colleges of business	United States & Territories, Latin America, and Canada	522 accredited institutions
National Association of Trade and Technical Schools 2021 K Street, NW Washington, DC 10006	1965	Accredits private residence schools offering occupationally oriented specialty training programs in trade and technical careers, which culminate in a certificate, diploma, or degree	United States & Puerto Rico	591 schools in 46 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico
National Home Study Council Accrediting Commission 1601 18th Street, NW Washington, DC 10009	1926	Grants institutional accreditation to home study schools; programs of instruction may range from kindergarten through graduate study	United States	61 accredited institutions

Standards (Essentials) for Accreditation

Each commission publishes standards of membership. These standards indicate to the institution the items upon which the commission will base its findings once the accreditation process (the application, self-study, and on-site visit) is complete. The standards also will assist the institution to improve the quality of education it offers. An example of headings for the Standards of Membership of one commission (CVTC, 1976) follows:

- Purposes and objectives
- Control and administration
- Finance
- Students
- Program of studies
- Physical plant
- Learning centers (library)
- Publications, public announcements, public relations
- General (any other relevant subjects)

A document of standards of membership in its entirety can be found in Appendix C.

Institutions with vocational, technical, and occupational programs at the secondary level will generally fall within the secondary schools commission of the accrediting association. Although the standards may vary somewhat among associations, they are similar to the standards mentioned previously. A copy of the Standards of Public Schools is included in Appendix D.

In programmatic accreditation there also exist standards for accreditation, although the standards are more uniformly termed *essentials*. The essentials for program accreditation tend to direct themselves to the specific program components rather than to the institution as a whole. In many cases, however, institutional accreditation is a requirement for program accreditation. Such institutional accreditation could be granted by a recognized national accrediting association, such as the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools, rather than by one of the six regional accrediting agencies. A complete set of the Essentials for a Medical Record Technician program is included in Appendix E.

Below are headings for the essentials of a program.

- Educational institutions
- Clinical affiliations
- Facilities
- Finances

- Faculty
- Advisory committee
- Students
- Records
- Curriculum
- Administration
- Accreditation information
- Summary and conclusions

EMERGENCE OF VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL, AND OCCUPATIONAL ACCREDITATION

As early as the late 1960s state legislators and governors became concerned about the eligibility of vocational institutions for federal funds. The concern was prompted in part by the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963. The then National Governor's Conference and the Western Governor's Conference, along with a series of regional legislative groups under the Council of State Governments, adopted resolutions urging the regional accrediting commissions to extend with all due speed accrediting opportunities to vocational institutions.

In 1969 the new Education Commission of the States (ECS) became interested in accreditation of vocational education. The same governors and legislators introduced, and had adopted by the Commission, a resolution recommending that

> the political and educational leadership in each of the states be encouraged to impress upon their regional accrediting associations that accreditation of vocational-technical education should become an integral function of each of the several regional accrediting associations.

In early 1969 the commission issued a short report (No. 15), *Vocational-Technical Accreditation*, which listed various alternatives but came to the conclusion that it would be far better to use existing institutional accrediting agencies than to create additional agencies or turn to the federal government. The ECS reported factors that they felt would complicate the accreditation of occupational education.

1. Failure to determine whether program accreditation, institutional accreditation, or both are at issue
2. Inability to determine what vocational-technical education includes
3. Diversity of occupational education programs which may be part of the comprehensive high school, separate institutes, in a community college program, supported publicly, privately, or by a variety of proprietary institutions
4. Recognition that accreditation in America has historically been a voluntary and jealously guarded relationship between an institution and an accrediting agency, which, in the minds of many, is threatened by the involvement of governmental agencies
5. Allegations that federal funding threatens the traditional freedom of institutions
6. The unresolved issue of creating fifty state accrediting systems or maintaining existing regional accredition
7. Confusion regarding program approval versus institutional approval

8. Indecision regarding development of additional accrediting agencies or expansion of existing ones to cope with specialized educational programs

9. Disagreement on accrediting programs at the two year level

ECS concluded that the only areas of agreement to date (1970) among the various agencies concerning accreditation of occupational education were that—

1. creation of additional agencies would serve only to complicate the accreditation process further;

2. centralizing accrediting responsibilities in an agency of government at any level would be contrary to the voluntary nature of accreditation as it has developed in the United States and would inject governmental controls in an area of educational concern that has historically been free of such controls; and

3. solution to the problem of occupational education should capitalize on existing accrediting machinery.

In 1970 ECS, in cooperation with the North Central Association, brought together in Chicago representatives of the higher commissions, the secondary commissions, the institutional specialized agencies, the Office of Education, and the American Vocational Association (AVA), as well as state legislators and a governor as chairman, to explore possible solutions. The Educational Commission of the States followed, with a Task Force on Occupational Education in Postsecondary Education, which issued a report, *Vocation Is "Calling"* (Mill 1979).

At about the same time, December 1969, the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education (FRACHE), with the cooperation of the Council of Regional School Accrediting Commissions (CORSAC), requested a study of the current activities of the institutional accrediting associations as they relate to institutions that offer occupational education programs. The report submitted by these two groups summarized recommendations for improvement of institutional accreditation by the regional associations. The recommendations of this study are as follows:

1. Further development of institutional accrediting procedures and approaches appropriate to the occupational education area would seem to require that the associations recognize, accept, and react positively to certain basic realities. (The report elaborates these realities.)

2. Particular basic philosophical and operational concepts in institutional accreditation need to be questioned if the associations are to be able to develop appropriate responses to this field.

3. A comprehensive survey of the range, number, types, and locations of institutions offering occupational education in each region should be undertaken.

4. As the associations increase their knowledge of and involvement with the occupational education field, the structural form of each association should be carefully studied to ensure that each is designed to provide adequate mechanisms for dealing effectively with these new activities. Such study and possible changes resulting from it should be based primarily upon the association resources (not vested interests) in relation to the education institutions and needs of the region.

5. Each commission should develop separate guidelines, criteria, or standards for the evaluation of institutions offering occupational education, which may also apply to occupational programs in comprehensive institutions.

6. All federation (FRACHE) policy statements should be reviewed and modified where necessary, with reference to their appropriate application to institutions offering occupational education.

7. The institutional accrediting associations and their constituent commissions, particularly the higher commissions and FRACHE, should become actively involved in the development of, and seek to become approved by, the Interim National Commissions on Accreditation (NAC). (Bartlett, Childers, and Stanavage 1970)

(Author's Note—The Council of Regional School Accrediting Commissions is active as of this writing. The Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education and National Commission on Accrediting were merged in 1975 and became the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.)

The Ward Study

The negative overtones of a 1970 study by Ward opened the eyes of the accreditation community. The purpose of the study was to provide information on the state-of-the-art of accreditation and evaluation that would be used as a foundation for future improvement in the accreditative and evaluative processes in occupational education.

> There is a pressing need to determine the extent to which there exist systematic, reliable, and valid methods of evaluating the effectiveness and quality of postsecondary occupational education at the local, state, and national levels. Increasing financial commitment to such education by federal and state governments, coupled with increasing competitive demands upon limited resources to fight crime, pollution, and poverty, makes it imperative that the utilization of funds allocated to occupational education be maximized in terms of such factors as reduction of unskilled unemployment, benefits to the maximum number of people, and benefits to society as a whole. A minimization of excessively high or low standards, duplication of effort, the teaching of obsolete skills, and the output of trained individuals in excess of market demands is also required. (Ward 1970, p. 3)

Ward expressed concern about the reliability and validity of the instruments used in the accreditation process, questioning particularly their ability to predict quality in programs of occupational education. He also noted concern about the expertise of regional and specialized accrediting agencies and associations to make judgments concerning occupational education. Other observations were that there was little, if any, public membership (representation) in the various accrediting governing boards and that there were major philosophical differences concerning the scope, purposes, and objectives of accreditation. The most alarming finding of the study, which applies equally to the regional and specialized accrediting agencies, is the lack of application of scientific principles and techniques to the evaluative process dictating the extension or denial of accreditation.

American Vocational Association Task Force

The initial interest of the American Vocational Association (AVA) in becoming involved in the accreditation business was prompted by a resolution approved by the Assembly of Delegates at its 1975 convention in Anaheim, California. The action stated:

> Be it resolved, that the AVA explore the feasibility of instituting procedures for accrediting all public and private vocational education programs and institutions and report back to the AVA Assembly of Delegates during the 1976 AVA convention. (American Vocational Association 1975)

In March 1976, the American Vocational Association established an Ad Hoc Committee on Accreditation, which subsequently recommended to the board for its consideration that AVA establish a permanent commission on accreditation (American Vocational Association 1976a).

A Committee on Accreditation of Vocational Education was established. At its first meeting November 16, 1976, in Washington, D.C., the committee members expressed the following concerns about the current status of accreditation and vocational education:

1. All of the existing accreditation agencies are not answering the needs of vocational education.
2. The increased emphasis on postsecondary vocational education programs places vocational education in institutional settings that have traditionally sought accreditation.
3. Accreditation is an effective system for improving quality of vocational education programs.
4. There appears to be a need for AVA to take a leadership role in accreditation at this time.
5. Vocational institutions should have alternative agencies for accreditation.
6. Accreditation is a responsibility of the profession and thus AVA should assume this responsibility for vocational education.
7. There should be standards for vocational educators to evaluate their programs. (American Vocational Association 1976b)

The Committee on Accreditation held three meetings and during these meetings developed a report recommending establishment of the National Commission for Accreditation of Vocational Education (NCAVE), including constitution, bylaws, and dues structure. This report was submitted to the AVA Board on March 9, 1977, in St. Louis, Missouri. The board accepted the report but delayed further action until a survey of state directors could determine a level of interest.

National Workshop

Under the leadership of B.E. Childers, Executive Director of the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a National Workshop on Accreditation and Vocational Education was held in Denver, Colorado, on

May 29-31, 1979. The workshop, with fifty participants, including representatives of all existing accrediting agencies and a cross section of vocational educators from state agencies and local institutions, was sponsored by the American Vocational Association, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, and the Council on Regional School Accrediting Commissions. It was funded by the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers' Association.

The workshop was organized to develop program standards and improved accrediting procedures to deal with the complexity of vocational programs and needs. It addressed concerns related to accreditation and program standards troubling many vocational educators. Several recommendations for future action were developed.

The major recommendation of the group regarded the role of AVA, COPA, and CORSAC. The group recommended that a task force coordinate, identify, and propose other initiatives, and provide a continuing basis for communications. It would include members of these organizations and representatives from business and industry. Activities recommended for each of the three sponsoring organizations were as follows:

AVA

- Develop generic criteria for the accreditation of vocational education
- Work with other appropriate groups in developing occupational clusters and guidelines for developing specific local standards and for conducting self-studies
- Build pools of experts who could serve as consultants to institutions and as team members for accrediting site visits
- Sponsor workshops and conferences to inform vocational educators concerning accreditation

COPA

- Provide for AVA affiliation with COPA
- Establish a committee or task force on vocational education
- Review its provisions and procedures for recognition to ensure that COPA-recognized accrediting groups, where appropriate, have representation from vocational educators and employers and to provide for consideration of vocational education institutions or programs seeking accreditation
- Sponsor an occasional paper or papers on the subject of accreditation and vocational education

CORSAC

- Affiliate with COPA to provide for more effective interaction between secondary and postsecondary accreditation

- Establish a committee or task force on vocational education accreditation. (American Vocational Association 1979)

Sponsors Accept the Challenge

In response to recommendations made by conference participants, the executive directors of AVA and COPA made specific commitments for their organizations. These commitments are reported below.

AVA

1. Develop guidelines for self-study
2. Assist in building pools of experts
3. Look at the development of a task force to follow through on many conference recommendations
4. Work with regional accrediting agencies in identifying elements of concern
5. Conduct an inventory of accreditation resources presently available and identify gaps
6. Work on the development of generic criteria for vocational education
7. Educate vocational educators about accreditation issues

COPA

1. Report to the boards of COPA, CORSAC, and specialized agencies on conference recommendations
2. Find ways to make existing agencies' work more responsive to the special needs of vocational education
3. Examine how self study can be used in the accreditation process
4. Provide for AVA affiliation with COPA
5. Establish a committee on vocational education
6. Prepare an occasional paper on the accreditation of vocational education (American Vocational Association 1979)

ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The process of accreditation, whether it be programmatic or institutional, consists primarily of three steps. They are (1) *application*—when an institution or program makes its initial (formal) request for accreditation candidacy to the respective accrediting body; (2) *self-study*—when the institution or program using the essentials and standards of the respective body analyzes, reviews, and researches itself to provide a document for evaluative consideration; and (3) *on-site visit*—when a selected team of peers representing the respective accrediting body visits the candidate's facility to conduct a tour and review the self-study document.

The Application

The application process for accreditation varies among accrediting bodies, depending upon whether the institution is requesting candidacy status, initial accreditation, or continued accreditation. The executive head of the institution should make the request for institutional accreditation by contacting the specific accrediting agency.

The Self-Study

The self-study phase of accreditation is considered by experienced professionals in the accrediting community to be the most beneficial part of the process. A self-study includes both a document produced by the institution and the process used to produce that document. The document is used by the on-site team to conduct its study of the applicant; obviously, the more complete the document is, the more effectively the on-site team can do its work.

Institutional self-study, as defined by the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, should be an ongoing process for purposes of improvement. Whether used for accreditation or other purposes, self-study is an analysis by in house staff of an institution's resources and effectiveness in fulfilling its stated mission. The aim must be to understand, evaluate, and improve, not merely to defend what already exists (Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges 1978).

By its very nature, a self-study causes the individuals in the institution to turn and look at themselves, and inevitably to see areas and methods for improvement. It may not seem to be the most efficient way to determine an institution's quality, but it works. It also causes staff members to acquaint themselves with the basic purposes and philosophies of the institution, thereby effecting realignment with original goals.

It is very important to involve the entire institution, if possible, in the self-study process. In many instances, one person is assigned the entire self-study in order to expedite the process; in such cases the self-study loses its effectiveness and original intent.

The involvement of the faculty and staff in the self-study process can have many indirect side effects. It can motivate them to seek changes in policy, suggest new rules, and take

leadership roles. When individuals are required to search out answers to questions that are not normally their direct concern (e.g., faculty involvement in student affairs, staff investment into health and safety, role of institutional advisory committee), they are more likely to make a personal contribution and commitment to the institution. It is also important that each subcommittee report its findings to an assembly of the entire faculty and staff, which indirectly promotes discussion, concern, and awareness of the institution as a functioning "whole."

Kells (1977) maintained that the self-study is a process, not merely a document. The self-study process should, however, produce a readable document for the visiting team or other group, serving as both an introduction to the college and a summary of the problems, strengths, recent actions, activities, and probable steps to be taken as a result of the self-study.

In program accreditation the same theory holds true. The Council on Education of the American Medical Record Association and the American Medical Association's Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation have two purposes in asking institutions to make a self-evaluation (self-study) before an accreditation site survey team visit: (1) to help the institutions make a critical self-examination, which the Council on Education and the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation believe to be of primary importance; and (2) to obtain information needed by the survey team for the on-site visit and by the accrediting agencies for their background study of the school and the program (American Medical Record Association 1980).

Hirst (1974) asked respondents to identify activities that they, as administrators, instructors, counselors, and supervisors, performed for institutional self-study and to give their perception of the utility of each activity for meeting objectives of the self-study. The twenty activities ranked most useful by some 312 individuals surveyed were these:

1. Selecting a chair for the overall steering committee
2. Preparing a "plan of action" for the self-study
3. Familiarizing all staff members with the standards of the commission
4. Providing for involvement of all staff members
5. Evaluating the institution's relationship to the twelve standards of the commission
6. Gathering preliminary information needed for planning the self-study
7. Preparing objectives for the self-study
8. Conducting in-service programs for the staff
9. Conducting regular meetings of the overall steering committee
10. Planning staff orientation programs for the self-study
11. Cooperating with other members of the staff in conducting the self-study
12. Selecting an overall steering committee for the self-study
13. Examining previously established goals for the institution in light of the standards for evaluation

14. Working with a representative of the commission in preparing a revised draft of the self-study

15. Working on preparing the final written self-study report

16. Conducting staff orientation programs for the self-study

17. Working with a representative of the commission in organizing the self-study

18. Selecting a chair for each general working committee

19. Preparing a revised draft as final copy of the self-study report

20. Preparing plans for institutional improvement

The success or failure of the self-study phase of the accreditation process rests heavily on the commitment of an institution to the process. Kells and Kirkwood (1979), in examining a large number of self-studies of varying forms, procedures, motivations, and approaches over a six-year period, discovered that important to the self-study process were (1) primary motivation and leadership commitment, (2) selection of the steering committee, and (3) design of the self-study. They stated, "Committed leaders and internal motivation appear to be the keys to self-study success." They went on to point out, "Central to the total process is a steering committee that designs and organizes the study in light of institutional circumstances, is usually active in selecting the work groups and their members, and coordinates the ongoing activities. This committee is usually the key body in interpreting the results of the studies and deliberations, and in formulating recommendations for institutional change and improvements, which is the major outcome of an effective self-study process" (p. 33). The proper design of the institutional self-study processes must be sensitive to the particular circumstances and needs of a specific institution. The self-study process will usually require that the institution set aside from eight to eighteen months for completion. The average self-study begins approximately one year prior to the on-site visit. Appendix F gives an example of the process of traditional institutional self-study in the form of a suggested Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT). The PERT makes reference to a time frame as well as to the items in the process to be completed.

The above description holds true for a majority of postsecondary accreditation processes. Many secondary institutions conducting a self-study have found the publication *Evaluative Criteria*, fifth edition, to be a useful guide (*Evaluative Criteria* 1978). Section 4 specifically addresses educational programs that deal with vocational, technical, and occupational education.

Published self-study guidelines are available from all accrediting agencies, whether institutional or programmatic, postsecondary or secondary. Requests for these guidelines should be made directly to the agency prior to embarking on a self-study.

Alternatives to the Traditional Self-Study

Alternatives to the traditional self-study have been designed by some accrediting agencies to provide flexibility to institutions. The Middle States Regional Accrediting Association has provided six approaches in conducting a self-study (Kells 1972):

1. Comprehensive self-study

2. Comprehensive self-study with certain emphasis
3. Selected topics approach
4. Current special-study approach
5. Regular institutional-research approach
6. Preparation for a case study

Another alternative approach for the traditional self-study is the Sequences Studies-Intensive Workshop Model. This model uses only one group throughout the study, a steering committee that assumes a much heavier burden than the traditional self-study committee. The characteristics and strengths of this model are (1) the clear establishment of a sequence—data collection, followed by broad but intense participation; (2) the clear reliance on both the steering committee and departmental (or divisional) discussion early in the study to identify problems that need work; (3) the total lack of study-long committees (except for the steering group); (4) the use of short workshops open to all interested professional staff members and students; and (5) the clear expectation that changes in policy and procedure and the solutions to some problems will be identified and implemented during the study (Kells 1977). The fifth edition of the *Evaluative Criteria* expresses concerns regarding the completeness of section 4-18 for accreditation of secondary vocational-technical programs. Many regard sections 4-1 through 4-18 as excellent instruments for the evaluation of programs in a comprehensive secondary school; but if a student spends at least half of the school day in a vocational-technical setting, section 4-18 is not an appropriate self-study document.

Further study by the National Study of School Evaluation, the body responsible for developing the *Evaluative Criteria*, is needed to provide a much needed new document for the evaluation of vocational-technical education at the secondary level. This could be developed by surveying the current state of the art of the evaluation of vocational-technical education and developing new instruments to fill the void.

The On-Site Visit

The Evaluators

The foundation of accreditation mandates that the institution be evaluated on the basis of how well it is doing the things it says it is doing. For this reason the institution must have a good understanding of its philosophy and objectives. The evaluator determines how well the institution is carrying out its stated educational objectives without interjecting personal judgments or thoughts as to how an institution should be operated or comparing it with another institution.

The self-study, as completed by the institution, serves as the most valuable tool an on-site team possesses. It is very important that it be in the hands of the team well in advance of the visit to enable each member to read, study, and prepare questions for attention during the on-site visit. Although the self-study acts as a comprehensive tool for the evaluators, it is still necessary for a peer evaluation team to make a formal on-site visit. This contact provides the opportunity for the visitors (an objective source) to observe the unique characteristics of an institution that might not be covered in the self-study. These factors might have been overlooked by the institution either intentionally or unintentionally, or taken for granted. Nonetheless, they could have a significant bearing on accreditation status, and go unrecognized without the objective analytical eye of the on-site team.

It is important that each member of the visiting team should thoroughly understand the standards of the commission the team represents and that each member function within the established guidelines. An indoctrination session for the team held prior to the evaluation process sets the tone and describes the charge of the evaluators. This session is conducted by the chairperson of the visiting team and/or the commission's director of evaluation.

It is advisable for the on-site team, in its attempt to get an accurate picture of the operation of the institution, to talk to as many staff members as possible. Every member of the institution has been involved in the self-study phase of the accreditation process and should therefore have the opportunity to express any considerations to the on-site team.

It is also extremely important that the visiting team be properly instructed on its role on campus. All members of on-site teams must keep in mind that they are there by invitation. Personal bias and/or comparisons to similar institutions have no place in a visiting team's evaluation.

In order to evaluate an institution or program effectively, it is important for an on-site team to get an accurate picture of its day-to-day operation; therefore the team should strive to cause a minimum amount of disruption to that daily process. Conferences should be arranged to be mutually convenient for all parties involved.

Selection of Evaluators

The peer evaluation process of accreditation entails selecting individuals from institutions that have achieved accreditation status. Under normal conditions these individuals must be familiar with the standards of the commission they are representing and must have had exposure to accreditation, either through involvement in the accreditation of their home institution or service on other accreditation visits.

In a study to determine whether or not selected accrediting associations have developed procedures to ensure that their examiners (evaluators) are well prepared for the tasks they must perform, eleven accrediting associations were examined. The major conclusions of this study were these:

1. Association staff members selected examiners who had been identified as professionals and therefore, were presumed to possess evaluative skills and experience critical in the accreditation process. The identification and selection of examiners was a highly informal process.

2. Seven of the eleven accrediting associations did not have formal examiner training programs but instead depended upon printed materials, personal contacts between the association official and the examiner, experienced team chairmen, and actual visitation experience to train the examiners. The formal training programs were designed to increase the examiner's judgmental competence to do what was required in the accrediting process.

3. The accrediting associations with one exception had evaluative procedures to determine which individuals were competent to make the judgments required in the accrediting visit. These evaluative procedures were highly informal, often verbal, and did not exist in written form. The one exception had a formalized, required evaluative process.

4. Duties and responsibilities of the examiner in the accrediting process, as stated by the accrediting association, were clearly communicated and understood by the examiner prior to an accrediting visit.

5. There are identifiable skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are essential elements in the selection, training, and continued use of examiners by accrediting associations.

6. The members of the examining teams of accrediting associations were judged to be well prepared to make the kinds of judgments required of them in the examining visit largely by virtue of their individual professional competence, previous experiences and positions held, and their present position. (Baysore 1971)

The on-site visit aspect of the accreditation process for vocational, technical, and occupational institutions is different from that of traditional liberal arts institutions. Although the processes are similar, differences arise in the size of the visiting team and duration of the visit.

Vocational, technical, and occupational institutions by their nature have very specific objectives and tend to offer highly specialized professional training. Whereas a single on-site team member could be responsible for the evaluation of several departments in a liberal arts curriculum, usually several more specialized on-site members would be necessary to evaluate the wide spectrum of vocational programs found within one institution. In program accreditation, the on-site team normally includes two or three individuals. The duration of their stay on campus is usually two or three days, depending on the size and scope of the program being accredited. In most cases a staff member from the accrediting agency is in attendance during the on-site visit.

Generally the institutional accrediting agency on-site team relies on the results of any programmatic accrediting agency's findings and given status. This does not mean that the team completely overlooks such programs, but it does ensure minimum quality of standards by respecting the results of that accrediting agency. During the on-site team's deliberations, this factor is an important consideration.

Upon completion of the on-site visit, the team will be in a position to report its findings to the commission. It is important that the team's report be checked by the chief administrative officer of the institution or the program director for factual accuracy before its submission to the commission for any action. The report submitted should include findings based on each of the commission's standards of membership, as well as commendations, recommendations, and discussion of conditions that need immediate attention. Some commissions refer to strengths and weaknesses in relation to the various standards, while others, particularly program accrediting agencies, will refer to items needing attention. The concerns identified by the visiting team serve as a guide in determining the accreditation status to be recommended to the commission. The report should also include the visiting team's recommendation to the commission for determining official accreditation status.

Conduct of the Evaluators

Thompson (1975) has suggested that the following tenets of ethical conduct be expected of all evaluators:

1. Avoid acceptance of assignments where there may be possible conflict of interest.

2. Show appreciation and courtesy to institutional personnel.

3. Do not allow institutional or personal social events to interfere with the evaluation process.

4. Accept no gratuities, gifts, or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgments.

5. Avoid naming individuals from an institution either in praise or criticism in the team report or in conversations on the campus.

6. Avoid becoming involved in arguments with members of the institution.

7. Resist becoming involved in the politics of the institution or the community.

8. Conduct conferences and interviews as part of the on-site visit in a collegial manner to elicit information relevant to the evaluation process.

9. Resist temptations to seek employment or recruit personnel during the on-site visit.

10. Participate in the entire on-site visit, including the orientation session and the exit interview.

11. Regard the conversations and other aspects of the evaluation process as confidential between an institution and the commission.

12. Observe courteously and unobtrusively during the on-site visit.

13. Carefully review the information provided by the institution before the visit.

14. Tolerate ambiguity and persevere in working on unpleasant tasks.

15. Avoid advocating personal educational theories or those of other team members.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Federal Role in Accreditation/Eligibility

A unique aspect of accreditation in the United States is that it is primarily nongovernmental and voluntary in both institutional and programmatic recognition. In most countries the establishment and maintenance of educational standards are the responsibility of a central government bureau. The benefits and implications of a nongovernmental system of accreditation, a system of peers, are too numerous and too detailed to discuss within the scope of this monograph. This system does, however, ensure a nonpartisan application of standards relatively free of the opportunity for political infiltration.

Although accreditation is referred to as "voluntary and nongovernmental," a point of clarification should be made. Most state departments of education tend to require their postsecondary institutions to acquire accredited status. Further, in certain cases, accreditation is required even to qualify students to sit for licensure examinations. In actuality, accreditation is far from voluntary if survival by the institution or program and full service to those they serve are to be enjoyed.

Referring to accreditation as nongovernmental may also be somewhat misunderstood. There are seventeen federal statutes requiring the commissioner of education to address accreditation. An institution seeking the benefits of federal funds when it is accredited by a commission not "recognized" by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) is, as one educator put it, "like brushing teeth without toothpaste."

Certainly, many levels of government, especially the federal government through the USED's Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, have been powerful governmental nationwide influences imposing the "voluntary" process of accreditation. Officials of the Department of Education are currently wrestling with the language that describes the essential purpose of accreditation (Jacobson 1982). The writer and many others regard accreditation as a mark of minimum quality. As one leading educator has suggested, "accreditation and quality are synonymous" (Bradley 1980).

For purposes of determining eligibility for United States government assistance under certain legislation, the U.S. Commissioner of Education is required to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies and associations that are determined to be reliable authorities on the quality of training offered by educational institutions and programs. Most institutions thus attain eligibility for federal funds by holding accredited or preaccredited status with one of the accrediting bodies recognized by the commissioner of education, in addition to fulfilling other eligibility requirements. Some legislation provides for special qualifying steps that may be taken as alternatives to the normal accreditation process.

The Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation, formerly the Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility Staff, was established in 1968 by the commissioner of education to deal with accreditation and eligibility matters. Located in the Bureau of Higher and Continuing Education, the division has the following major functions:

1. continuous review of procedures, policies, and issues in the area of the Office of Education's interests and responsibilities relative to accreditation and eligibility for funding;

2. administration of the eligibility for funding process;

3. administration of the process whereby accrediting associations secure initial and renewed recognition by the Commissioner of Education;

4. liaison with accrediting associations;

5. consultative services to institutions, associations, other Federal agencies, and Congress regarding accreditation and eligibility for funding considerations;

6. interpretation and dissemination of policy relative to accreditation and eligibility for funding issues in the case of all appropriate programs administered by the Office of Education;

7. conduct and stimulation of appropriate research; and

8. support for the Commissioner's Advisory Commitee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility (Nationally Recognized Accrediting 1978).

Proffitt (1976) in explaining "The Federal Connection" describes its three characteristics.

First, there are at least seventeen major federal statutes that mandate to the commissioner's authority to "publish a list of Nationally Recognized Accrediting Agencies and Associations which are determined to be reliable authority as to the quality of education or training." Thus, by statutory provision, the Commissioner must make an active determination regarding each applicant accrediting body and be accountable to Congress and the courts for the action.

The second characteristic of the connection is its limited nature. It involves judgment, "recognition," and listing of accrediting bodies, rather than regulation as it is commonly conceived.

A third characteristic is the very important aspect of voluntariness in the connection. There is no legal or other requirement for an accrediting agency to secure recognition from the commission in order for it to function.

Oversight System

Young (1979a) elaborates on three major tools (state authorization, legal sanctions, and self-regulation) for ensuring the integrity of institutions of postsecondary education. The oversight system requires the coordinated use of all three.

State Authorization

Foremost among these tools is the responsibility of the states for the chartering and/or licensing of institutions of postsecondary education. If this role is not carried out properly (and in many states it is not), then subsequent actions by accrediting bodies or federal agencies can properly fill the gap.

Legal Sanctions

There are on the books a wide array of federal and state statutes providing both criminal and civil sanctions against individuals or institutions who violate the law. These sanctions can and should be used whenever law breaking occurs.

Self-Regulation

Beyond state authorization, self-regulation by institutions and their various associations is the most effective means of ensuring proper behavior. The case for self-regulation is based on the following basic principles:

1. As a general rule, self-regulation is preferable and, in the long run, is more effective than external regulation.

2. Any system of external regulation can be effective only to the extent that it recognizes and builds upon a community's willingness to engage in self-regulation.

3. A substantial number of individuals and institutions will regulate themselves if they know what behavior is expected and why.

4. An overwhelming majority of individuals and institutions will regulate themselves if they believe that they might be identified by their peers as doing the wrong thing.

5. Only a relatively small number of individuals and institutions deliberately engage in behavior that they know is not in the public interest. No matter how many laws you pass or rules you write or inspectors you hire, these will not prevent these operators from operating (Young 1979b).

Costs of Accreditation

The problems that concern most educators in regard to the present accreditation process are proliferation, redundancy, and wasted time. There is a dire need to reduce the costs of accreditation greatly without threatening the purpose and validity of the evaluation process.

The Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation estimates the accreditor "costs" per pupil, when value of volunteer services is added, to be $49.88. Self-study average cost per pupil is $369.63. There is, however, a wide cost range that is very sensitive to class size.

The following cost containment measures are in operation by some review committees and under consideration by others.

- Simplified meeting procedures
- Reduced number of meetings
- Tele-conferencing
- Use of two-person unit teams only, and use of joint surveys

- Confining visits to two days, one and one-half days, or one day, as possible
- Use of team members from short distances
- Simplification of essentials
- Reduction of self-study report documentation requirements
- Conducting reliability and validity studies
- Standardizing procedures
- Combining/reducing annual report requirements
- Extending accreditation on the basis of progress reports rather than visits
- Controlling per diem rates
- Finding alternative means of assessing clinical affiliates
- Extending the maximum and the average lengths of accreditation (Parks 1980)

According to the North Central Association Review in 1975, the average per-institution cost for specialized accreditation was, $2,082; for state accreditation, $1,548; for the North Central Association, $9,025 (Keyser 1975). Presently it is estimated that costs in the New England area for institutional accreditation range from $9,000 to $12,000, with the self-study phase costing about $5,000 to $8,000.

Articulation

There is a need for a system of articulation to issue guidelines for a smooth transition for the student continuing from secondary school through colleges and universities and graduate and professional schools. Kintzer (1982) suggests that regional accrediting associations should draft policies covering more than the transfer dimension of the articulation relationship, and should consider going on record in support of establishing a National Articulation Association.

> The original purpose (of accreditation) was to enhance student articulation throughout the education system. Yet to this day, not one articulation programs meeting has been held to bring together curriculum experts by discipline from secondary schools and colleges to discuss the content overlap and solutions. (Kells 1976)

Multiple Accreditation

A report by Kells and Parrish (1979) on multiple accreditation in the United States of provided the following conclusions:

1. Institutions not regionally accredited do not exhibit any substantial multiple accreditation relationships. Very few of these generally small, career-oriented institutions are accredited by more than one agency.

2. Regionally accredited institutions have a wide range of accrediting relationships and a greatly skewed pattern or distribution of such relationships. About 40 percent have no relationship other than that with the regional agency. Fully two-thirds have two relationships or fewer, and 90 percent have five or fewer.

3. The 10 percent of the regionally accredited institutions that have more than about five accrediting relationships are predominantly large (89 percent over 5,900 student in size, 63 percent over 10,000 student in size) and offer degrees on the upper end of the degree spectrum (98 percent at least the master's degree, 75 percent the doctorate).

4. There is a strong relationship between the number of accrediting relationships for regionally accredited institutions and the size of the institutions. This relationship holds in each type of institution as distinguished by highest degree offered. Relationships increase in a sequential way as one moves up through the highest degree categories. Thus, highest degree level is a factor which also influences the number of accrediting relationships that institutions hold.

5. There are somewhat more accrediting relationships for public institutions than for private institutions.

6. The general patterns and characteristics described in points one through five above hold for each of the regions of the country.

7. There are some specific regional differences in the patterns of accrediting relationships. Three of the six regions (New England, Southern, and Western) seem to have generally fewer accrediting relationships per institution. These patterns do not hold for all institutional sizes and degree levels. The large, master's, and doctorate level institutions in some regions have far fewer relationships than do similar institutions in other regions.

8. Ten of the specialized accrediting agencies/areas dominate the rank order distributions of agencies that accredit at regionally accredited institutions. These agencies, with few exceptions, are the most active regardless of institutional size and degree level. They account for about 75 percent of the accrediting relationships held by specialized agencies.

9. A longitudinal analysis in one region indicated a modest growth in accrediting relationships (about 20 percent) in the 1970-79 period. The growth occurred primarily on the lower end of the number of relationships distribution. Public institution relationships grew somewhat more than did private institution relationships. Little growth in the number of relationships for larger institutions as a group over time occurred during the period. The number of relationships for the master's/professional category and for the associate degree category grew, while no growth occurred for the doctorate and baccalaureate institutions.

10. A cohort analysis of nineteen large universities indicated that from 1970 to 1978 the median institution increased by +2 relationships. The range was from -1 to +7 relationships. (p. 41-45)

Empirical Studies

There is a serious lack of empirical studies to determine the validity and reliability of not only the accreditation process but especially the self-study requirements and components and the specific standards (essentials) developed by various accrediting associations.

> Accreditation criteria do not emerge out of empirical research. They grow out of experienced educators' judgments as to what characteristics constitute a reputable institution . . . accreditation decisions should continue to be based on the opinions of professional educators, but their judgments should rest on solid empirical and philosophical grounds. (Troutt 1979)

Further Study

Questions for further study in accreditation have raised various issues that should be addressed by agencies such as COPA, CORSAC, AVA, and by other educators with a concern for accreditation. Young (1979), past president of COPA, has identified some of the more important questions for further study.

- Can existing accrediting bodies, which usually are organized by levels (secondary, postsecondary), effectively deal with vocational education, which does not sort itself out by levels? Can accrediting bodies that accredit degree-granting institutions or degree programs also appropriately evaluate nondegree institutions or programs?

- What is the appropriate relationship between institutional and program accreditation? Can (should) individual programs be evaluated as part of an institutional evaluation? Should institutional accrediting bodies undertake responsibility for evaluating programs? Is institutional accreditation a necessary prerequisite for program accreditation?

- Can (should) regional accrediting bodies adopt and implement national standards for vocational education programs?

- Are programmatic accrediting bodies prepared to address the quality assessment needs of various vocational education programs? How would (should) they relate to one another, to institutional accrediting bodies, to organizations like AVA?

- Accrediting bodies are expected to reflect their evaluation, policy, and decision-making processes to all appropriate groups within the community of interests affected by the scope of their accreditation. Does (should) this include employers and professional leaders in vocational education?

- Do accrediting bodies have effective means for establishing the validity and reliability of accrediting standards for vocational education? To what extent are input and outcome measures utilized? How can accrediting bodies foster innovation and improvements in vocational education? How can accrediting bodies actually reject institutions and programs that fail to meet standards?

- What should be AVA's role in developing, promulgating, and enforcing standards in vocational education?

Other than the stated functions of accreditation, there are other problems that should be addressed by the accrediting community. To illustrate:

- How best can accreditation cope with the proliferation of satellite educational operations in the form of branch campuses and scattered centers of postsecondary education, often only loosely controlled by parent institutions?
- How can the accrediting community best work with other educational organizations in the development, recognition, and use of such new devices as credit banking and credit by examination? How should accrediting agencies deal with the problem of financial health of institutions in these days of rising costs and falling enrollments?
- What tests should educational institutions meet, in seeking accreditation or reaccreditation, to warrant confidence in their stability and continuity?
- How can the accrediting process be used to encourage and refine the measurement of educational outcomes?
- To what extent, and in what areas, is it feasible for accreditors to expect specific evidence of results, in both simple and complex institutions, as a measure of educational quality?
- To what degree may confidence still be placed in such familiar criteria as institutional structure, conditions of learning, and support as indicators of educational effectiveness? (Selden 1977)

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational accreditation in the United States has become a very important factor for educational institutions. The system is designed to recognize these institutions and various programs within institutions as meeting a level of performance, integrity, and quality that inspires confidence in the educational community and the public it serves. The uniqueness of the American system is that it is nongovernmental, unlike the many countries that have established a ministry of education to oversee and supervise educational offerings. Voluntary in nature, the accreditation system consists of members of the various accrediting associations, who are responsible for establishing criteria for accreditation, arranging site visits, evaluating institutions that desire accredited status, and publishing a list of those institutions and programs that meet certain minimum standards established by the criteria.

Equally important to educational institutions is the financial impact accreditation has for those that rely on federal support in the form of student financial aid. Institutions that participate in these various grants must be accredited by an agency that appears on the United States commissioner of education's list of recognized accrediting agencies. Agencies that appear on this list must meet certain established criteria.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is a nongovernmental organization that works to foster and facilitate the role of accrediting agencies in promoting and ensuring the quality and diversity of American postsecondary education. The Council of Regional School Commissions has a similar charge as it relates to secondary education accreditation.

The accreditation process involves four broad components: (1) a clear statement of educational objectives as developed by the institution, (2) the self-study, (3) the on-site committee visitation to the institution, and (4) the action of the accrediting agency regarding the accreditation status of the institution or program being accredited.

The uniqueness and value of this system is best expressed by four factors given by Ken E. Young, former president of COPA, in the 1975-76 *President's Annual Report*.

- The accreditation function is located in the private not the governmental sector.
- It balances off the interests of institutions, professionals, and the public.
- It draws its lifeblood from the contributed efforts of thousands of volunteers.
- Despite persistent problems and occasional crises, it works.

The problems in accreditation have been and will continue to be proliferation, redundancy, and wasted time in doing parallel tasks in multiple accreditation. This is all reflected in costs to the institution, which continue to escalate. Means to reduce costs must be implemented. The following are recommendations for consideration if we are to improve our present system.

- Accrediting agencies should strive for more cooperation in scheduling joint on-site visits in both institutional and programmatic accreditation.
- A common self-study should be developed and shared by the agencies.
- A single national accrediting agency should be formed to specifically coordinate institutional and multi-program on-site visits tied in with an acceptable single self-study guide.
- Institutions should develop an acceptable single self-study method and format for the collection and reporting of data and information required by accrediting agencies.
- The frequency of accreditation as prescribed by various accrediting agencies should be studied to explore the feasibility of more standardization in an effort to develop a planned schedule of joint on-site visits.
- Additional research is recommended regarding the validity and reliability of the accreditation process and its components. This should be in the form of empirical studies to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the present methods used in accreditation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ACCREDITATION TERMINOLOGY

General

Accreditation—Concept

Postsecondary accreditation is the concept—broadly developed in the United States—whereby groups of educational institutions, professional practitioners, or educators from voluntary, nongovernmental associations (1) encourage and assist individual institutions or programs in the evaluation and improvement of their educational endeavors and (2) identify publicly those institutions or specialized units that meet or exceed commonly accepted standards of educational quality.

Accreditation—Process

Postsecondary accreditation is a process by which an institution or a specialized unit of postsecondary education periodically evaluates its educational activities. Accreditation involves an independent judgment by peers as to whether the institution substantially achieves its own educational objectives and meets the established standards of the body from which it seeks accreditation. Generally, the accreditation process involves (1) a clear statement of the institution or unit that examines its activities in relation to those objectives; (2) an on-site evaluation by a selected group of peers that reports to the accrediting body; and (3) a decision by this independent body that the institution or unit does or does not meet its standards for accreditation.

Accrediting Body

An accrediting body is a voluntary, nongovernmental association that administers accrediting procedures for entire institutions or for specialized units. A *recognized* accrediting body is one formally acknowledged by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation as having met COPA's provisions and procedures for recognition. A *listed* accrediting body is one determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority on educational quality.

Educational Quality

Because of the great diversity in purpose and form represented by American higher education, educational quality cannot be defined adequately in specific standards or requirements applied uniformly to all institutions and specialized units. For purposes of accreditation, however, an institution or specialized unit with accreditable educational quality is one that has appropriate objectives; a sound strategy for achieving those objectives, as judged

by the standards of the body providing accreditation; an ability to assemble and apply resources adequate to that strategy; and an ability to measure the attainment of its objectives.

Institution of Postsecondary Education

An institution of postsecondary education, for purposes of accreditation, is an enterprise whose main objective is the offering of educational programs and/or the evaluation of educational attainments primarily for persons who have completed secondary school. Such an institution will (1) be chartered or licensed (where available) for such purposes; (2) have stated educational objectives appropriate to the postsecondary level that lend themselves to evaluation; (3) be under the legal control of a lay board (or its equivalent); and (4) have a faculty that plays a meaningful role in determining educational standards. [In "profit" education, lay boards do not exist in all cases. In such cases a Board of Trustees may exist.]

Self-regulation

Self-regulation is based on the recognition that most human activities are ruled satisfactorily through the awareness of their effect on or acceptance by others. Accreditation—as a voluntary and nongovernmental activity, as a process organized around self-study and peer review, and as an advocate for institutional autonomy—plays a major role in preserving the self-regulatory quality of American postsecondary education. Other dimensions of self-regulation in postsecondary education include the maintaining of guidelines for, and institutional commitment to, good practice, as well as the willingness of accrediting bodies to monitor by exception between accreditation reviews (i.e., to investigate only matters that appear to be contrary to presumed acceptable practices).

Accrediting Process

Application

An application is the formal request submitted to an accrediting body by an institution of postsecondary education when it or one of its specialized units wishes to be considered for accreditation or for candidacy for accreditation.

Criteria

Generally speaking, criteria—along with *standards*, *requirements*, or *essentials*—are statements reflecting an accrediting association's expectations of an accreditable institution or specialized unit. While different distinctions among these terms are made by the various accrediting bodies, within a single body the criteria (and/or standards, requirements, or essentials) provide a common frame of reference within which institutions or specialized units are evaluated and accredited. The auxilary verbs used in the wording of criteria are *shall* and *must*.

Educational Objectives

Educational objectives are statements developed by postsecondary educational institutions to describe the goals of the teaching/learning process within an institution or unit and in the context of which an accrediting body makes its evaluation. Such objectives, in order to be useful for the purpose of accreditation, must lend themselves to evaluation.

Guidelines

Guidelines are explanatory statements that amplify the criteria (standards, requirements, or essentials) for accreditation. They usually provide examples of the way criteria may be interpreted to allow for flexibility while remaining within the framework of the criteria. The auxiliary verbs used in the wording of guidelines are *should* and *may*.

Self-Study

The self-study is a comprehensive analysis of the educational resources and effectiveness of an institution or specialized unit in relation to its educational objectives. The immediate product of this report is the essential document in the process.

On-site Evaluation

The on-site evaluation consists of the visit to an institution or educational unit by a team of peers appointed by the accrediting body specifically for their competencies relevant to the institution or unit being evaluated. The on-site visit follows the completion of the self-study and the submission of the self-study report to the accrediting body. This visit enables the evaluation team to determine the accuracy and completeness of the self-study and to evaluate the applicant's effectiveness within the context of its stated educational objectives and in light of the accrediting body's criteria.

Types of Accreditation

Institutional Accreditation

Institutional accreditation is a status accorded an institution of postsecondary education, which embraces the whole institution as it defines itself and therefore includes all areas, activities, and programs. Normally, institutional accreditation testifies to (a) the appropriateness of the objectives of the institution; (b) the adequacy of its organization and generally accepted accrediting standards; and (c) evidence of the accomplishment of institutional objectives in a reasonable measure. Moreover, the criteria of eligibility provide that degree programs, however specialized, must rest upon a base of liberal or general studies required of all or most students. However, accreditation of the institution as a whole is not, and should not be interpreted as being, equivalent to specialized accreditation of a part or program of the institution and should not be represented as such. The nine commissions of postsecondary accreditation in the six regional accrediting associations accredit a variety of institutions within their geographic regions. Also, several national accrediting bodies provide institutional accreditation for special purpose institutions throughout the United States. And, finally, specialized accrediting bodies, when they accredit single purpose institutions, provide institutional as well as programmatic accreditation.

Specialized Accreditation

Specialized accreditation is a status accorded a special unit within an institution of postsecondary education, which may be a college, school, division, department, program, or curriculum. In the case of a single purpose institution, specialized accreditation also constitutes institutional accreditation. The focus of specialized accreditation is the effectiveness with which the program meets its objectives, those of the institution, and the accrediting standards of quality education. Normally, specialized accreditation reviews the relationship of the program to the larger unit, the adequacy of the organization and resources for program maintenance and development, and evidence of accomplishment of programmatic objectives. However, specialized accreditation does not propose to make judgments on the institution as a whole, except in the cases of single purpose institutions.

Accreditation Classifications

Accreditation

Accreditation is a status granted an institution or specialized unit that has undergone the accrediting process and has been judged to meet or exceed general expectations of educational quality.

Candidate for Accreditation

Candidacy for accreditation is a status that may be granted by an accrediting body to indicate that an institution or unit has expressed its desire to become accredited and that the accrediting body judges the institution or unit to have the potential for achieving accreditation within a reasonable period, normally a maximum of six years. Candidacy, however, does not assure accreditation. (This status may also be referred to as pre-accreditation status.)

Conditional Accreditation

Conditional accreditation is a status indicating that an institution or a unit has certain deficiencies that must be corrected within a specific period of time in order for the institution or unit to remain accredited. (While some accrediting bodies may make certain distinctions among these terms, conditional accreditation may also be referred to as *probationary* or *provisional accreditation*.)

APPENDIX B

ACCREDITING AGENCIES RECOGNIZED BY THE COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITATION

Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools

Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration

American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business

American Association of Bible Colleges

American Bar Association

American Chemical Society

American Council for Construction Education

American Council on Education for Journalism

American Council on Pharmaceutical Education

American Dental Association

American Dietetic Association

American Home Economics Association

American Library Association

American Medical Association, Committee on Health Education and Accreditation

American Optometric Association

American Osteopathic Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American Podiatry Association

American Psychological Association

American Society of Landscape Architects

American Speech and Hearing Association

American Veterinary Medical Association

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education

Association of American Law Schools

Association of Independent Colleges and Schools

Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada

Council on Chiropractic Education

Council on Education for Public Health

Council on Rehabilitation Education

Council on Social Work Education

Engineers' Council for Professional Development

Foundation for Interior Design Education

Liaison Committee on Medical Education of the Council on Medical Education, American Medical Association and the Executive Council, Association of American Medical Colleges

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education

National Architectural Accrediting Board

National Association for Practical Nurse Education and Service

National Association of Industrial Technology

National Association of Schools of Art

National Association of Schools of Music

National Association of Trade and Technical Schools

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

National Home Study Council

National League for Nursing

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Vocational, Technical, Career Institutions

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Colleges

Society of American Foresters

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Occupational Education Institutions

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

APPENDIX C

STANDARDS OF THE DELEGATE ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMISSION ON OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The South rapidly is becoming a great technological and production resource for the nation. Because of this, the region requires greater emphasis on the occupational preparation of its citizens for their full and gainful lives within a complex society.

Education of the populace can be accomplished only when a breadth of educational opportunity is available to all citizens. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has committed itself to the improvement of occupational education throughout the South, an effort intended to strengthen the region's economy as well as its educational system.

The educational process should be broad as well as specific and should not be limited to education for just one skill. Education should enhance opportunity for mobility within an occupation and adaptability of individuals to changing conditions in the world of work. Occupational education, specifically, must meet the individual's educational requirements which may be less than a college degree but necessary to him for employment or promotion.

In order to expand its activities for the improvement of occupational education institutions in the South, the Southern Association created the Commission on Occupational Education Institutions. The Commission was formed with the approval of delegates from colleges, secondary schools, and elementary schools which heretofore comprised the Southern Association.

The new Commission's function is not to duplicate efforts of the three existing commissions, but to expand the Association's overall effort to improve the quality of occupational education. It proposes to do this by first identifying and strengthening through the accreditation process those institutions in the South eligible for accreditation. Several hundred of these institutions are known to exist.

In order to achieve the desired improvements, a Candidate for Accreditation procedure is made available so that institutions, on a voluntary basis, may participate in a program to develop and apply standards of quality for self-improvement and evaluation. A subsequent process, also voluntary, is applied to those institutions which desire full accreditation by the Southern Association.

The effort of applying standards for improvement is aimed at the overall institution as well as at each program within the institution. The Commission on Occupational Education Institutions subscribes to the theory that the strength of an institution lies in the strength and quality of its individual programs.

SOURCE: Southern Association of Schools and Colleges 1980.

To be eligible for candidate status, a school, institute, or center must:

a. Be a legally constituted institution.

b. Have a clear emphasis on occupational education as the core of instruction.

c. Be a non-collegiate institution of occupational education.

d. Be located within the identified boundaries of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

e. Have undergone a preliminary review by a representative of the Commission to determine that there is a reasonable expectation of accreditation.

f. Effective December, 1972, candidate institutions demonstrating progress toward becoming accredited may remain in candidate status for a period not to exceed three (3) years.

After an institution has been a candidate for one year, it may file application to become accredited. To be eligible for accreditation by the Southern Association, the institution must:

a. Have undergone a self-study based on the Standards and procedures approved by the Commission and filed the required documents with the Commission.

b. Have undergone a visiting team review by a committee assigned by the Commission.

c. Be recommended by the Commission for accreditation, except that by appeal, the Delegate Assembly may accept the institution without recommendation of the Commission.

d. Be accepted by a majority vote of the Delegate Assembly of the Commission.

Standard One

Philosophy and Purpose of Institution

The philosophy of the postsecondary occupational education institution should be a statement which expresses the beliefs, concepts, and attitudes of the school as to why it was established and continues to operate. It reflects the basis for the on-going purposes of the school and its program. The purpose of the school is to implement and work toward the fulfillment or realization of the philosophy.

The purpose of the postsecondary occupational education institution should be to instruct men and women to such levels as to qualify them for employment and/or advancement in existing or potential occupations. The statement of purpose must be clear and concise and shall represent the official concept of the institution. Each institution shall clearly define the educational services it provides.

A reevaluation of an institution's statement of philosophy and purpose shall be made annually by the administration, faculty, and institutional advisory committee to assure the school's constituency that the institution is meeting its educational commitments. Because

occupational education institutions are educating individuals for employment and/or advancement in the world of work, an institution should relate its educational offerings to the needs and standards accepted by business and industry. To further this purpose an organized and functional institutional advisory committee shall be appointed to provide input from the community.

Each institution shall have an appropriate publication which reflects accurately the institution's statement of philosophy and purpose and the means through which this is to be achieved.

Standard Two

Organization and Administration

This institution must have a properly constituted governing body which has legal responsibility for the school's operation. Board members should have experience, ability, and dedication to the philosophy and purposes of occupational education. This legal body establishes written policies for institutional operation, secures the resources for support, appoints the chief administrative officer, and assumes all legal responsibilities.

Policies established by the governing board serve as guidelines for operational procedures, and should be defined in a manner that is clearly understood by the community the institution serves. Authority for the implementation of policy shall be delegated to the persons responsible for the operation of the institution.

The administration shall be composed of the chief administrative officer and personnel needed to perform all duties required for the efficient operation of the institution.

The organizational structure of the institution must reflect that its purpose is to facilitate the instructional process. In a democratic society, this implies that the opportunity should be provided for each individual in the institution to contribute whatever knowledge and expertise he may possess to the operation of the institution. Generally accepted methods of accomplishing this include a published organizational structure, policy manuals, and provisions for functional administrative councils, faculty committees, and student committees.

Standard Three

Long-Range Planning

The institution must have a long-range plan for developing new programs and for phasing out those which are not meeting the needs of the service area.

This plan must include demographic studies, occupational surveys' curriculum development, cost estimates, potential enrollment figures including disadvantaged and handicapped, facility and equipment needs, and instructor availability. The plan also must identify the source of sufficient funds so that existing programs will not be jeopardized.

Priorities based on the factors above must be established for new programs. Where appropriate, members of the staff and advisory groups, governing body, and levels of administrative control should be involved in new program development.

The institutional plan must include evidence that appropriate national, state, and local agencies have been included in the formulation of the plan. It must include provisions for periodic evaluation and modification in light of new developments.

Expansion or modification of facilities shall be a part of the long range building plan so as to complement the school's plan for growth and updating of programs. This plan should include adequate space for parking, driveways, and walkways, and should be designed for maximum safety.

In the long-range planning of classrooms, shops, and laboratories, the institution should seek professional assistance from persons knowledgeable of space and physical requirements in the proposed occupational expansion.

The institution shall involve the staff and/or advisory committees in the planning of proposed expansions and modifications.

Standard Four

Educational Programs

Occupational education programs of the institution must clearly reflect the philosophy and purpose of the institution and the needs of the people it serves.

A statement of purpose for each specific occupational program must be developed and reevaluated annually as a means of updating instructional offerings and as a measurement of the institution's contribution to the individual, the business or industrial community, and to society. Fundamental to any educational program must be: a clear definition of objectives; admission policies which reflect the philosophy of the institution and insure the student a reasonable expectation of success; and an ongoing program of evaluation and reassessment. The objectives and content must be correlated with the current business and industrial needs.

Any evening or extension classes are to be considered as a part of the regular educational program and must satisfy the requirements of each Standard.

A. *Admissions*—Admission to the educational program shall be determined by written policies and rules of the governing board(s) and the institution offering the programs. Additional admission requirements for specific programs should be designed to account for licensing and/or certification procedures at both the state and national level. Admission requirements shall be reasonable in relation to expectations for success in the occupation and be based on past experience with student success and failure. All applicants who meet admission requirements and who can profit from the instructional program shall be eligible for entry. Admission policies for all programs within an institution shall be clearly expressed and openly published. Recruiting activities shall be ethical, and materials used for this procedure shall be factual and accurately stated. No effort shall be made to encourage students to withdraw from another educational institution. An institution may accept applicants of high school age who drop out of a secondary program when the administrations of both institutions determine that this change will be beneficial for the student.

   In recognition of the mobility of the population and the changing job market, transferability between similar programs should be a part of admission policies.

B. *Programs*—Occupational education is the primary reason for the existence of the institutions. Programs should be established through a procedure which utilizes the governing body, administration, faculty, and advisory committees. Consideration should be given to additional agencies, both governmental and nongovernmental, which in certain instances can contribute to this process. An example of this is the use of the employment service agencies which may provide statistical data for surveys of occupational education needs.

A publication which accurately explains the programs offered in the institution shall be publicly available. This publication shall be designed to assist the prospective student in planning his program.

Within the limitations of available resources, the general ongoing program of the institution should be of sufficient scope to meet the occupational education needs of all persons in the community who should be served. Institutions should have a procedure whereby specialized and innovative programs can be accommodated. The institution should be in a position to react to the rapidly changing needs of the community.

Institutions should ensure that programs which have been established are still needed in the labor market and should be in a position to discontinue any program for which the need no longer exists. A process must be established for continuous evaluation and updating of all programs.

C. *Instruction*—The instructional programs must be organized to provide the knowledge and skills development that are essential for success in the occupation. Within the classrooms, shops, and laboratories, there must be evidence that instruction has been properly organized and is being implemented through multimedia approaches.

Teaching methods and procedures must make provision for individual differences and needs. When needed, corrective and remedial provisions should be a part of the instructional program. To ensure skill proficiency, sufficient practice must be provided with appropriate and suitable equipment similar to that currently accepted in business and industry. Job orientation, work habits, and attitudes must be interwoven into the instructional program to assure job compatibility. Institutions are encouraged to make use of cooperative education and work experience programs. Desirable, relevant and current practices existing in business and industry should be followed, and industrial resources, such as craft advisory committees, should be utilized in the planning, implementing and evaluating of the instructional programs.

Activities which include health emphasis, job safety, and fire prevention must be an integral part of instruction.

Records showing the progress of the individual student must be maintained and made a part of his permanent file. There shall be a system of evaluating student achievement. There must be demonstrated a continuous effort to determine the effectiveness, reliability, and validity of the methods of evaluation.

Standard Five

Staff

Selecting, developing, and retaining a staff which is competent to meet the purposes of the institution is of utmost importance to the success of the institution. In order to have an effective program, the staff must be made aware of the established philosophy and purposes, so that each staff member may relate his activities to the overall aims of the institution.

There must be a published salary schedule. The schedule should provide for progressive salary steps based on such factors as the staff member's occupational experience, administrative experience, teaching experience, educational level, and demonstrated competencies as applicable. Where other factors based on individual school conditions apply, they should apply equally in all cases, and should have some basis for application.

The successful instructional program is dependent in large part on good morale of the staff. This factor is a determinant in every phase of the instructional program and, therefore, due consideration should be given to the establishment of policies and procedures which affect the morale of the staff. There should be clear channels of communication between administration and staff which will allow for effective interchange of ideas and information.

To have a continuity of educational excellence, each staff member must be evaluated as to performance and effectiveness. Each institution shall provide for the staff member's self evaluation and for evaluation by a supervisor. This process shall be continuous, with at least an annual formal evaluation and review.

A. *Administrative and supervisory staff.* The head of the institution should have a background of occupational experience, occupational education, professional preparation, and the ability to communicate with business, industry, and the total school community. Other members of the administrative and supervisory staff should have qualifications commensurate with assigned duties as reflected in published job descriptions.

B. *Faculty.* Realizing that occupational instruction is unique in education, all instructors should have an adequate general education and recent work experience which will enable them to relate their instruction to business or industrial methodology. In addition to these minimums, all instructors will meet or exceed permitting or certificating requirements.

1. *Professional Staff Selection and Preparation*—A specific plan in keeping with the purpose of the institution should exist for selection of a staff. Criteria for the screening of professional staff should facilitate selection of the best-qualified available candidates. These criteria should also reflect the minimum standards of educational preparation and occupational experience. As a minimum, occupational instructors must have a high school education and display recognized competency in their occupation. Competency should be recognized only after a period of actual work experience beyond the learning level. A planned pre-service program shall be provided for all new instructors.

2. *Professional Growth*—The continued success of any institution is dependent on the professional growth of the instructional staff. In order to provide for such growth, the institution should encourage individuals to upgrade continually their occupational competencies and educational knowledge. Illustrations of such encouragement are as follows:

a. Provide an in-service program with required attendance by instructional staff.

b. Provide the opportunity for occupational upgrading by periodic "on-the-job" work experience in each occupation.

c. Provide for periodic formal professional training.

3. *Teaching Load*—It is recognized that instructor-student ratios affect teaching efficiency. The instructor-student ratios affect teaching efficiency. The instructor-student ratio for any program should be based on the following factors:

a. Type of program

b. Size of instructional area

c. Necessary instructor-student contact

d. Nature of laboratory/classroom instruction

e. Number of work stations

4. *Faculty Involvement with Industry and Business*—The very nature of an occupational education program mandates that the instructor keep abreast of current methods and practices utilized in the occupation which he teaches. There must be evidence of liaison between each instructor and the respective business or industry. This will be done by periodic visitations and personal contact between the instructor and the establishments involved. All such contacts are needed to promote a direct relationship between the effectiveness of the educational program and the industrial simulation in the school. The use of advisory committees in accomplishing these objectives is considered desirable.

C. *Noninstructional Staff.* The ultimate goals of any institution require that clerical, custodial, and maintenance staff be employed to assure efficient operation. Office personnel must be employed to provide those services necessary in maintaining student records, financial records, teaching materials, and such correspondence, reports, and records as may be required by the institution. Custodial staff must be employed to provide for good housekeeping and maintenance of the facilities and grounds. The institution must provide for preventive maintenance and services to ensure operation of the facilities.

The duties and responsibilities of each of the noninstructional staff must be described and assigned. In-service training should be provided for all noninstructional staff on a continuing basis.

Standard Six

Learning Resource Center(s)

Learning resource center(s) must be provided by the institution. This requirement may be met in any one or any combination of the following ways: (1) within the individual classrooms, (2) within the individual laboratories, (3) within individual shops, or (4) in a schoolwide learning resource center.

Provision must be made in the budget for supplies, maintenance, and repair of equipment.

A. *Facilities*—The learning resource center(s) shall include sufficient materials to facilitate a multimedia approach to instruction. The equipment and materials must be appropriate to the needs of the programs served. Materials shall include technical manuals and trade, technical, and professional periodicals.

The administration shall be responsible for providing adequate learning resources to support both students and faculty in the instructional programs.

B. *Budget*—The institution shall provide an annual budget for the purchase of reference books, materials, audio-visual aids, and other special equipment and materials to meet the needs of instructors.

C. *Staff*—If a central resource center is provided, a person or persons shall be assigned the responsibility for its maintenance and use. If individual learning centers are provided within the classrooms and/or laboratories and shops, a person shall be delegated the responsibility for maintenance of each center.

D. *Records*—A centralized system within the institution must be in effect for purchasing, recording, and distributing learning resource materials and equipment. A current inventory shall be maintained.

E. *Service*—Learning resource facilities and materials must be available for use by the students during the regular school hours.

F. *Evaluation*—A plan must exist for evaluating the effectiveness of the learning resource center(s). Such a plan should include as a minimum, a determination of the adequacy of present facilities based upon time-space utilization, stock capacity, seating capacity, and preparation space for audio-visual materials. Periodic utilization studies should be made of audio-visual aids, audio-visual equipment, reference materials, periodicals, and books. These studies should include utilization by both students and faculty.

Standard Seven

Financial Resources

An accepted principle is that quality occupational education programs require adequate financial resources. The extent of an institution's ability to meet its philosophy and objectives is closely integrated with its ability to acquire adequate finances for programs. An institution must exercise proper management, financial controls, and business practices for continued operation and financial commitment.

In addition to these stated principles, an institution must consider its financial resources as a basis for immediate and long-range planning. Care should be exercised in long-range planning to assure a reasonable and realistic tie to projected financial resources.

A. *Budget preparation and control.*

1. *Internal Budgeting*—An institution must have a developed budget based upon the scope, objectives, and purposes of the institution. Such budget development will be directly

related to the estimated number of students to be served. There will be evidence of staff involvement in the developmental process of the institution's budget. The budget will contain sufficient major categories that will insure distribution of funds for the administration, instructional program, plant maintenance, equipment and supplies (both instructional and non-instructional), custodial and security services.

2. *External Budgeting*—In the instance of budget development outside the institution, on a system basis, the financial resources must be judged in relation to the size of the institution and the estimated number of students served. Consideration of institutional needs requiring increased budgeting in certain categories will be provided. Such considerations might include abnormal budgeting of maintenance and equipment funds, and for other items needed for updating or expansion. Outside agencies may not exercise unduly restrictive financial controls on the institution.

3. *Budget Control*—Adequate budgetary and auditing procedures will be used. The head of the institution will be required to utilize auditing and budgetary controls in keeping with local, state, and federal requirements. Adequate personnel must be available for proper record keeping, reporting, and auditing. Budget administration is considered an administrative function and not a governing board function.

B. *Sources and stability of income.* The institution will provide evidence that clearly identifies the sources of funds and indicates their stability, and which includes a minimum two-year history of expenditures. These factors will be judged on the basis of external financial support in lieu of a two-year expenditure history.

C. *Proper administration of finances.* Adequate records must be kept that identify all expenditures as they relate to the objectives of the institution. Periodic budget reports should be prepared for the head of the institution and, where applicable, for department heads and instructors. This is essential so that the budgetary status can be known by these persons responsible for fiscal administration. A method of reporting plant and equipment additions for insurance purposes must be evident. There shall be an organized procedure for receipt, deposit, safeguarding, and management of funds belonging to or owed the institution. Persons handling or collecting funds from any source should be bonded.

D. *Purchasing policies.* There shall be a system of purchasing that will insure economic use of budgeted funds. In the case of supply and equipment purchases, competitive bidding will be the first consideration for procurement. Therefore, a system must be in evidence for emergency purchases to assure the acquisition of instructional and non-instructional supplies and equipment repairs within a reasonable length of time to support continuous instruction. This system establishes a need for prior planning of long-range requirements by the total staff. In day-to-day operation, purchases may be required that cannot be preplanned or predetermined.

E. *Refund policy.* There shall be a clearly stated and publicized policy by the school relating to the refund of fees in the event a student does not enter the program or drops out before completion.

Standard Eight

Physical Facilities

Physical facilities include all the buildings and campuses of the institution. These elements should be designed and arranged to contribute to the achievement of the institution's purposes.

The campus should be of sufficient size to permit orderly growth and expansion over a period of time. A long-range plan for facility and campus improvement shall be developed and maintained.

A. *Existing Facilities*—Existing facilities shall include adequate space and utilities in classrooms, laboratories, and ship areas which provide for safe and orderly instruction. Noninstructional areas including storage and maintenance areas, rest rooms, offices, and lounges shall be adequate for the number of students and staff using such areas. Special consideration should be given to meeting the needs of handicapped individuals. A plan shall be developed and maintained for campus landscaping which shall include a priority listing of campus beautification items. In support of such a plan a current topographical map properly coded to the priorities should be on hand.

B. *Proper Lighting and Ventilation*—The institution shall provide adequate light, heat, and ventilation in all areas of the facility with particular attention to conditions which might adversely affect health and safety.

C. *Operation and Maintenance of Facilities*—A plan for operation and maintenance shall be developed and used by the institution. This should include the heating, air conditioning and ventilating systems, interior and exterior surfaces, landscaping, sidewalks, drives, parking areas, and elimination of all safety hazards. The institution shall place emphasis on proper maintenance and housekeeping by providing adequate material, equipment, supplies, and personnel to carry out such activities. Included in this plan shall be a method of evaluating the effectiveness of the maintenance program.

D. *Branches, Extension Centers, or Other Off-Campus Facilities*—Educational programs scheduled in branches, extension centers, or other off-campus facilities will be considered as a part of the total educational program and must satisfy the requirements of each Standard.

Standard Nine

Equipment and Supplies

Proper equipment and adequate instructional and non-instructional supplies must be made available to support the instructional programs offered by an institution. Funds must be budgeted to provide equipment and supplies in accordance with acceptable standards and at a level to assure quality occupational education.

To assure the success of new programs, planning should reflect that proper equipment will support the instructional program in such a manner that skills development can be achieved. Equipment selected should represent the grade and type used by business and industry.

The institution must have a system of supply and equipment inventory which includes instructional and non-instructional items. There must be evidence of provisions for maintaining equipment and for replacing obsolete equipment.

An institution must develop a method of purchasing and maintaining instructional and non-instructional supplies. These on-hand supplies and materials should be sufficient to permit competitive bidding for restocking. Where institutional size warrants, a central stockroom should be maintained for more effective control and distribution of both instructional and non-instructional supplies. A system to locate supplies, and a system of proper storage for supplies, must be maintained.

All instructional equipment and supplies must meet appropriate safety standards.

There will be a system for emergency purchases to assure the acquisition of instructional supplies and equipment repairs within a reasonable length of time to support continuous instruction. First aid supplies must be readily available.

Standard Ten

Student Personnel Services

The purpose of a program of student services in occupational education is to correlate the needs, desires, and abilities of the potential and currently enrolled students with the educational program and to assure a continuing service to students after they leave the institution. Student personnel services are to maintain orientation programs, keep a suitable system of personal records, and maintain programs of student activities, health services, and financial assistance. An adequate program of student personnel services must include an evaluative process whereby the effectiveness of the program can be ascertained, particularly in relation to student placement in remedial and on-the-job programs.

A. *Counseling*—Students who seek occupational education are characterized by wide differences in socio-economic backgrounds, wide ranges of intellectual ability, and marked variations in levels of attainment. It is critical that a student be placed in a program in which he is assured a reasonable expectation of success. A personalized counseling service, through the use of valid instruments and other means, can ascertain with a high degree of accuracy a student's achievement as well as his aptitude for various programs. An adequate program of counseling in occupational education includes studies of initial placement-in preparation of programs, success in training, initial job placement, and success on the job. Findings from such short-term and long-term studies should be used continually to improve the counseling and placement process.

   A counseling service as outlined above is predicated on having counselors who have adequate professional preparation, occupational experience, and an understanding of and commitment to occupational education. The size of the counseling staff should be determined by student enrollment and the types and levels or programs offered. There should be enough counselors to assist all students with personal as well as career-choice problems.

B. *Orientation Program*—There shall be a student orientation program to acquaint new students with policies, functions, and personnel of the institution. Students should be challenged and motivated to conduct themselves as responsible citizens since work attitudes, habits, and behaviors are an essential part of occupational education. Orientation should be an ongoing process which emphasizes study techniques and the use of media resources.

C. *Personal Records*—A person shall be responsible for maintaining official files and records of students. While such records must be kept confidential, the counselors should have access to them in order to provide proper guidance.

   Because of the value of student records, there must be adequate protection against pilferage, tampering, and fire. Each school must guarantee the security of student records through use of vaults, security files, or other such safety measures.

D. *Student Activities*—Student club activities, where provided, must be under the supervision of the institution and must relate to the purposes of the institution.

Institutions conducting organized athletic programs must provide proper supervision and control of such activities. Intramural programs should be encouraged. Students involved in athletic or other school activities should meet the same requirements as other full-time students.

E. *Health*—The administration must make provisions to assist students in cases of sickness or accidents on campus. Provisions must be made for emergency care in accordance with a written plan. A system for reporting and investigating all accidents shall be in effect. A plan shall be in effect for the safety of the students in the event of real, threatened, or impending danger.

F. *Student Financial Assistance*—A system to disseminate information to students concerning student loans, scholarships, parttime jobs, or other sources of financial aid should be provided by the institution.

G. *Special Student Services*—Each institution shall be responsible for any student services necessary for the welfare of the students.

H. *Evaluation*—Decisions made in the counseling and placement of students often affect these individuals for the remainder of their lives. It is imperative that the counseling process utilize instruments used in counseling and placement. The instructional staff should be encouraged to participate in these studies; however, the findings must be made available to the staff so that pertinent information will be utilized to improve grading techniques and the instructional process.

Standard Eleven

Placement and Follow-up

A systematic program of placement and follow-up is necessary to fulfill a major objective of occupational education. Educational institutions are obligated to provide placement assistance to individuals completing or terminating a program of study and to gather data in an effort to improve each program of study.

A. *Placement*—Placement is defined as an individual being accepted in an initial job, a more advanced job, in a more personally satisfying job, or in a higher or more advanced educational program. Successful placement indicates a cooperative relationship between the institution and community it serves.

The institution shall provide for placement services to all students. These services must be described in a written plan which is in operation. The plan must identify the one individual responsible for the implementation and coordination of the service and indicate each staff and faculty member's role and responsibility. At least annually, each staff and faculty member must be made aware and reminded of the communication and cooperation necessary to provide a comprehensive placement service. The plan for placement services must outline the essential elements of a communications network between the institutional placement coordinator, the staff, the faculty, and the various businesses and industries of the service area.

Placement records must be maintained on each graduate or early leaver and used as one means of measuring the success of the institution in meeting its objectives. A file listing of employers and employment opportunities must be maintained to facilitate the placement of current students. Assisting students in securing additional preparation and/or education is one necessary element of a placement service. Contact with and a file on other appropriate educational institutions must be maintained. A referral system should be part of the plan and should list the sequence of steps the coordinator, staff, and faculty follow in processing job information, student records, and employment interviews into a smooth and effective placement service.

B. *Follow-up*—Follow-up is one method of ascertaining the quality and continued validity of each instructional program. A written plan must be in use that aids in measuring the quality and validity of each instructional program. The plan must insure that follow-up is systematic and continuous with one person responsible for the coordination of all activities. The plan should include the assigned responsibilities and duties of the coordinator and each staff member in obtaining, recording, distributing, and using follow-up information. The plan should identify the information collection methods and procedures and assure that an effective communications network is operational.

Follow-up information must be collected on student completions and from their employers at least once annually for a three year period. When large numbers of student completions justify alternate approaches, consideration may be given to a statistically valid sampling procedure to collect follow-up information.

C. *Data Utilization*—Careful analysis is required to determine the staffing pattern and the information flow to best implement, use, and maintain a placement and follow-up system. Both placement and follow-up information must be made available to all instructional personnel and administrative staff and used to improve the institutional effort toward greater quality.

Standard Twelve

Community Relations

An effective and continuous program of community relations is necessary to maintain a close working relationship with business, industry, and other organizations, and to insure that occupational education is available to all persons who should be served by the institution. The purpose of such a program is to inform the public of the institution's operations and capabilities, and to generate active participation in the implementation of the institution's program. This active participation can come through orientation and counseling programs for public school students, through interest of advisory committees from business and industry, and through active involvement of civic and professional groups.

Administration, faculty, staff, and students within any institution should participate in its community relations effort, but to be of maximum effectiveness such an effort must be organized. One person in the institution should be responsible for the effort, and all others must know what is expected of them. The public information program should include the use of radio, television, and newspapers. Other media including brochures, student newspapers, alumni bulletins, yearbooks, and other school publications should be widely distributed throughout the community.

Central to any community relations program shall be a procedure for evaluating its effectiveness. Efforts shall be made to determine the extent to which the information program is reaching the desired audience, the image of the institution held by the various groups representing its constituency, and ways and means by which the image of the institution could be improved. A constant search should be made for new and experimental methods of improving the community relations program.

APPENDIX D

STANDARDS OF MEMBERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Member schools and those schools applying for membership and accreditation are expected to meet satisfactorily the following standards:

1. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

The school shall have a clearly stated educational philosophy which shall be supported by definitely stated objectives designed to meet the needs of the students and community served.

2. PROGRAM OF STUDIES

The school shall have a carefully planned program of studies and activities consistent with its stated philosophy and objectives.

3. GUIDANCE SERVICE

The school shall have an organized and coordinated guidance service to aid students in meeting educational, vocational, health, moral, social, civic, and personal problems.

4. EDUCATIONAL MEDIA SERVICES—LIBRARY AND AUDIO VISUAL

The school shall have a library, which is the center for resource material for every aspect of the school program. There shall be a professionally competent staff, an adequate collection of books and periodicals, auditory and visual aids, and other resource material. These facilities shall be effectively used in the educational program.

5. THE SCHOOL STAFF

The school shall have a professional staff, well qualified in character, health, personality, and competent in various educational and related services. Staff members shall have a sympathetic understanding of youth and a desire to continue professional growth. The staff shall be sufficient in number and adequately paid. It shall be a group motivated by high ideals and working together to attain the objectives of the school. The school shall have an adequate number of employees for nonprofessional services.

SOURCE: New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

6. RECORDS

An adequate system of student records and of permanent files shall be safely maintained. These shall include the cumulative record of attendance, progress in school, and results of objective tests. Student schedule cards and a master schedule of each teacher shall be maintained. An adequate system of records of faculty and administrative staff shall be maintained.

7. ADMINISTRATION

The principal or headmaster, although accountable to higher authorities, shall be the responsible head and professional leader of the school. He shall interpret to his superintendent, to his board of control, and to his constituency the place of the school in the life of the community. The board of control shall be responsible for the determination of policy and for the approval of appointments and expenditures. Under no circumstances shall the board perform the functions of the educational administrators.

8. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

The plant and equipment shall be adequate for the program of the school and shall be operated to assure the safety and health of the students, faculty, and non-professional staff.

9. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

School and community relations are of such importance in the development of a good secondary school that an appropriate system for promoting effective relations between school and community shall be maintained and constantly improved.

10. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support of the school shall be adequate to sustain the educational program—including activities—consistent with the philosophy and objectives of the school and with the standards of the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

11. SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE

The school shall have an appropriate intellectual atmosphere which indicates that an effective educational program prevails.

APPENDIX E

ESSENTIALS OF AN ACCREDITED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR THE MEDICAL RECORD TECHNICIAN

Initially adopted 1953; revised 1965, 1976
Adopted by the
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
AMERICAN MEDICAL RECORD ASSOCIATION

Program Review Committee
COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

PREAMBLE

OBJECTIVES

The American Medical Association and the American Medical Record Association cooperate in this program to establish and maintain standards of appropriate quality for educational programs in medical record technology, and to provide recognition for educational programs which meet or exceed the minimal standards outlined in the *Essentials*.

These standards are to be used for the development and self-evaluation of medical record technology programs. Lists of the accredited programs are published for the information of employers and all the public.

DESCRIPTION OF THE OCCUPATION

The medical record technician possesses the technical skills necessary to maintain components of health information systems consistent with the medical, administrative, ethical, legal, accreditation and regulatory requirements of the health care delivery system.

The functions of the medical record technician include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Technically analyze and evaluate health records according to standards established by current law, regulations and accrediting agencies.

2. Compile and utilize various types of administrative and health statistics, e.g., patient census, daily discharge analysis, monthly patient data reports and vital statistics.

SOURCE: Excerpted from the *Essentials and Guidelines of an Accredited Educational Program for the Medical Record Technician*, developed by the committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation, American Medical Association, and the American Medical Records Association. Chicago: Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation, American Medical Association, 1976.

3. Code symptoms, diseases, operations, procedures and other therapies according to recognized classification systems.

4. Release health information (medicolegal, insurance and correspondence requests) in accordance with professional ethics and in conformity with institutional policy and legal provisions.

5. Maintain and utilize a variety of health record indexes, storage and retrieval systems.

6. Perform patient registration activities.

7. Transcribe medical reports.

8. Complete and/or verify discharge data abstracts.

9. Prepare health data input for computer processing, storage and retrieval.

10. Maintain specialized registries, such as cancer, trauma, and stroke.

11. Abstract and retrieve health information used for evaluating and planning health care and health related programs.

12. Participate in committee functions relative to health records and patient information systems.

13. Provide data to the health care facility staff in patient care evaluation, utilization review, planning and research activities.

14. Supervise one or more health record service activities such as: transcription, work processing, filing, coding and indexing, statistics and correspondence.

    This function may include:

    — planning and assigning work loads

    — communicating work priorities to appropriate personnel

    — assisting in planning and implementing short and long range departmental objectives

    — assisting personnel under their supervision in their work

    — preparing appropriate reports on activities in units under their supervision

    — assisting in inservice education and the training of personnel

    — assisting in evaluating and improving the systems, forms, procedures, methods, and motions used in accomplishing work in units under their supervision

    — assisting in the preparation of departmental budgets

    — assisting in research and selection of systems, services, supplies and equipment.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

I. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

A. Location of Programs

Educational programs shall be established only in degree-granting educational institutions which are accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency and located in areas where clinical affiliation sites are available. (See II., Clinical Affiliations)

B. Standard of Ethical Practice

The medical record technology program must be conducted without discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age or ethnic origin. This principle applies to the selection of students, classroom and clinical practice instructors, other staff members and to all aspects of the organization and administration of the medical record program.

There shall be a published statement of the standards of ethical practice observed in the college or university.

II. CLINICAL AFFILIATIONS

A. There must be supervised clinical experience designed to reinforce the classroom and laboratory learning experience, to enable students to develop understanding of medical record procedures, to apply principles of medical record science, to observe employee relationships, and to interact with professionals in the health care field.

B. The clinical phase of the medical record technology program must be conducted in appropriate clinical sites, under competent clinical direction.

C. Assignments to gain experience in technical procedures must be under the direction of an accredited record technician or a registered record administrator.

D. The program director and academic center faculty shall be responsible for assuring that the activities assigned to medical record students in the clinical setting are educational.

III. FACILITIES

A. Adequate administrative and faculty office space, classrooms, laboratories, equipment, teaching aids, supplies and materials must be provided for the medical record technology program. Sufficient space must be available to effectively demonstrate health record systems and to provide opportunity for student participation in skill learning and group projects.

B. Library

An adequate supply of up-to-date scientific books, periodicals and other reference materials related to the medical record technology curriculum shall be readily accessible.

IV. FINANCES

Financial support of the educational program shall be assured through the regular educational budget of the sponsoring institution.

V. FACULTY

A. Program Director

1. Qualifications: The program director shall have at least a baccalaureate degree and registration by the American Medical Record Association. A minimum of three years experience in medical record administration at the administrative management level or other appropriate experience acceptable to the two bodies concerned with accreditation is required.

2. Responsibilities: In addition to other assigned responsibilities the director of the educational program shall be responsible for the organization, administration, periodic review, continued development, and general effectiveness of the program. The teaching assignment of the director must allow adequate time for administrative responsibilities.

B. Instructional Staff

1. Qualifications: The faculty shall be qualified through academic preparation and experience to teach the subjects assigned, and should have adequate and appropriate training in the areas of curriculum design and teaching techniques.

2. Number: The number of instructional staff shall be commensurate with the most effective learning and teaching practices and shall be consistent with acceptable student-teacher ratios for educational programs for the allied health professions.

VI. ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Appropriate support shall be established to assist the director in the development and continuing evaluation of the program.

VII. STUDENTS

A. Selection

Selection and screening of medical record technology students shall be done in accordance with the generally accepted practice of the educational institution.

B. Health

Students shall be required to submit evidence of satisfactory health prior to clinical assignments.

VIII. RECORDS

Records shall be maintained for all students in the educational program.

IX. CURRICULUM

A. Educational programs for medical record technicians shall lead to an associate degree or equivalent academic credit.

B. General topics of study must be in accordance with the educational philosophy of the institution offering the medical record technology program. Existing courses in the educational institution should be utilized when the course adequately meets the needs of the medical record technology students. The curriculum shall include courses in medical record science, anatomy and physiology (a laboratory course), basic pathology of disease process, general education and electives.

C. Assignments for directed clinical practice should be made to health record services in institutions and agencies that conform to the guidelines regarding clinical affiliations. The students' assignments shall be structured so that experience is gained in various types of health record services previously studied through classroom presentation and/or laboratory experience.

D. Sequence of courses, course content and credit allocation for medical record science courses shall be established by the medical record technology program director and faculty in accordance with appropriate administrative procedures.

E. Medical record science course work shall include study of the following topics as they apply to all the various types of facilities delivering health care.

1. Medical Terminology/Transcription

   a. Language of medicine including word construction, definitions, and use of terms

   b. Medical machine transcription

2. The Health Care Delivery System

   a. Medical staff organization and function

   b. Roles of health professionals and their relationships

   c. Role of professional associations

   d. Current trends in health care delivery

   e. Organizational patterns and functions of various health care institutions and agencies

3. Health Records

   a. Origin, content and use of health records

   b. Methods of securing, identifying, numbering, filing, preserving and retrieving health records

   c. Analysis of health records

d. Accreditation, certification and licensure standards relating to health records

4. Ethical/Legal Aspects

   a. Ethics of health care

   b. Laws and regulations as they pertain to the health record field

   c. Security of health data: principles involving control and usage of health information and confidentiality of medical information

5. Processing of Health Data

   a. Basic statistical techniques

   b. Mechanical and electronic information processing

   c. Basic concepts of record linkage

   d. Health data abstracting systems

   e. Health data display techniques

   f. Nomenclatures and classification systems

   g. Patient care evaluation techniques

   h. Purpose and function of specialized health information registries

   i. Utilization review and PSRO functions

6. Admitting Procedures

   a. Interview techniques

   b. Registration procedures

   c. Census and bed control

7. Personnel Supervision and Human Relations

F. Directed Clinical Practice

All programs shall include appropriate directed clinical practice experience in the following areas:

1. Technical analysis and evaluation of health records

2. Statistical compilation, display and retrieval of health information

3. Coding and abstracting health information

4. Medicolegal and correspondence procedures

5. Health record storage, retrieval and control procedures

6. Patient registration

7. Medical transcription procedures

8. Specialized health information registry procedures

9. Health care facility and medical staff committee procedures

10. Utilization review procedures

11. Patient care evaluation

X. CATALOG

The official publication of the educational institution shall include a description of the medical record technology curriculum and shall be updated at least biennially.

XI. PROGRAM STATUS

A. Accreditation

1. Application: The evaluation (including site visits) of an institution or program of study can be initiated only by the express invitation of the chief administrator of the sponsoring institution or his officially designated representative. Institutions may request that survey team visits be scheduled to coincide with evaluations of other health programs and/or accreditation bodies.

2. Review: The chief administrator of the institution being evaluated is given the opportunity to review the factual part of the report prepared by the visiting survey team and to comment on its accuracy before final action is taken.

3. Appeal: Accreditation decisions may be appealed by letter from the chief administrator of the institution to the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation of the American Medical Association.

4. Re-Survey: The AMA and AMRA will periodically re-survey educational programs for consultation and re-evaluation.

5. Withdrawal: The institution may withdraw its request for initial accreditation at any time (even after evaluation) prior to final action.

6. Revocation: The AMA Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation and the AMRA may revoke accreditation whenever:

a. The educational program is not maintained in accordance with the standards above or,

b. There are no students in the program for two consecutive years.

B. Reports

The Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation provides an Annual Report which must be completed, signed by the director of the educational program and returned promptly.

C. Closure

An institution planning to close a program or discontinue accepting students for a period of one year or more, must notify the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation and the American Medical Record Association at least one calendar year in advance of such action.

XII. APPLICATIONS AND INQUIRIES

A. Accreditation

1. Application for accreditation should be made to:
   Department of Allied Health Education and Accreditation
   American Medical Association
   535 North Dearborn Street
   Chicago, IL 60610

2. Information on accreditation should be obtained from:
   Academic Division
   American Medical Record Association
   875 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1850
   Chicago, IL 60611

B. Careers

Inquiries regarding career information should be addressed to:
American Medical Record Association
875 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1850
Chicago, IL 60611

C. Certification

Inquiries regarding the national accreditation examination for qualified graduates of the accredited program should be addressed to:
Examinations Office
American Medical Record Association
875 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1850
Chicago, IL 60611

Definitions of some terms used in the *Essentials* and Guidelines which may be helpful to users:

"*Essentials*" are policy documents which provide minimum standards for an educational program.

"Guidelines" are the explanatory materials for the *Essentials*.

"Shall" is used in laws, regulations or directives to express what is mandatory.

"Must" is an imperative need or duty; a requirement, an indispensable item.

"Should" is used to express ethical obligation or propriety.

"May" expresses freedom or liberty to follow a suggested alternative.

"Could" is used to suggest another alternative for meeting the intent.

"Sponsoring Institution" means the educational institution which assumes the primary responsibility for curriculum planning and course content, coordinates classroom teaching, and clinical experience, appoints faculty, provides financial support, admits students, and provides official evidence of completion of the program.

"Accrediting" means the process whereby an agency or association grants public recognition to a school, institute, college, university, or specialized program of study which meets certain established qualifications and educational standards as determined through initial or periodic evaluations. The essential purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a professional judgment as to the quality of the educational institution or program(s) offered, and to encourage continual improvement thereof.

"Institutional Accreditation" applies to the total institution and signifies that the institution as a whole is achieving its educational objectives satisfactorily.

APPENDIX F

A SUGGESTED PROGRAM EVALUATION AND REVIEW TECHNIQUE (PERT) FOR THE PROCESS OF THE SELF-STUDY DURING A TWO-YEAR POSTSECONDARY INSTITUIONAL ACCREDITATION

Reaccreditation

1. One year prior to renewal of accreditation, contact accrediting agency.
2. Accrediting Agency Commission Director forwards necessary materials for the start of the self-study process.
3. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) meets with Administrative Council (staff) to plan self-study.
4. Commission Director may meet with institution staff for discussion.

Initial Accreditation

1. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) decision to implement accreditation.
2. Letter of request for accreditation to accrediting agency (agency).
3. Agency responds by sending preaccreditation materials.
4. CAO or designee completes the data sheet.
5. Data sheet and other required materials returned to the agency.
6. Agency Commission Director submits request and materials at Commission meeting.
7. Commission Director could request additional materials or clarification.
8. Commission Director may appoint one or two individuals to visit the institution for a look at the general operation of the institution.
9. Individuals report back to the Commission Director.
10. Commission Director submits materials to the Commission meeting for vote of preaccreditation (candidacy) status.
11. Commission Director notifies the CAO of results.

12. CAO meets with Administrative Council to announce the accreditation status and decide on the next steps to take (time limit of this status depends on the agency).

13. Appoint steering committee chairperson.

14. CAO meets with chairperson to discuss strategies.

15. Select steering committee.

16. Meeting of steering committee to discuss accreditation.

17. Prepare data sheets, other handout information materials, and formats to use in self-study.

18. Steering committee meets to discuss and approve materials and format structure.

19. All-staff meeting for orientation/in-service on the self-study process.

20. Steering committee meets to develop the self-study plan (PERT).

21. Steering Committee meets to select subcommittee chairpersons and members.

22. Steering committee meets with subcommittee chairpersons to discuss strategies, procedures, deadlines, and to give out materials.

23. Subcommittees meet to plan their self-study.

24. Subcommittees perform their self-study.

25. Subcommittees meet to discuss their results of the self-study and vote to accept report.

26. Sub-committees submit the subcommittee self-study report to the steering committee.

27. Steering committee chairperson meets with the governing board to discuss the accreditation process.

28. Steering committee chairperson meets with the institution advisory board to discuss the accreditation process.

29. Steering committee chairperson meets with the Administrative Council (staff) to discuss accreditation progress.

30. Steering committee gathers all internal reports, printed materials, and documents pertinent to the self-study.

31. Steering committee meets with subcommittee chairpersons to discuss reports.

32. Steering committee votes on acceptance of each subcommittee report.

33. Steering committee meets to package the draft copy of the institution self-study report.

34. Steering committee votes on acceptance of the draft report.

35. Draft report is discussed and voted upon at a staff meeting with all staff.

36. Draft report is presented to the Administrative Council (staff) for review and comments.

37. Steering Committee meets to revise draft self-study report based on previous input.

38. Steering committee meets to vote on final self-study report.

39. Self-study report is printed.

40. Meeting of the staff to distribute self-study report and discuss next steps of the accreditation process.

41. Self-study report presented and discussed at a meeting of the governing board.

42. Self-study report presented and discussed at a meeting of the institution advisory council.

43. Self-study report presented and discussed at a meeting of the Administrative Council (staff).

44. Self-study report submitted to the COA for expediting to the accrediting agency.

45. Meeting of the steering committee to prepare for the on-site visitation.

46. Meeting of the Administrative Council (staff) to develop a plan of action for institutional improvement based on the results of the self-study.

47. Steering committee chairperson makes physical accomodations for the visiting committee.

48. Steering Committee chairperson gathers pertinent materials for the visiting committee.

49. On-site visit by visiting committee.

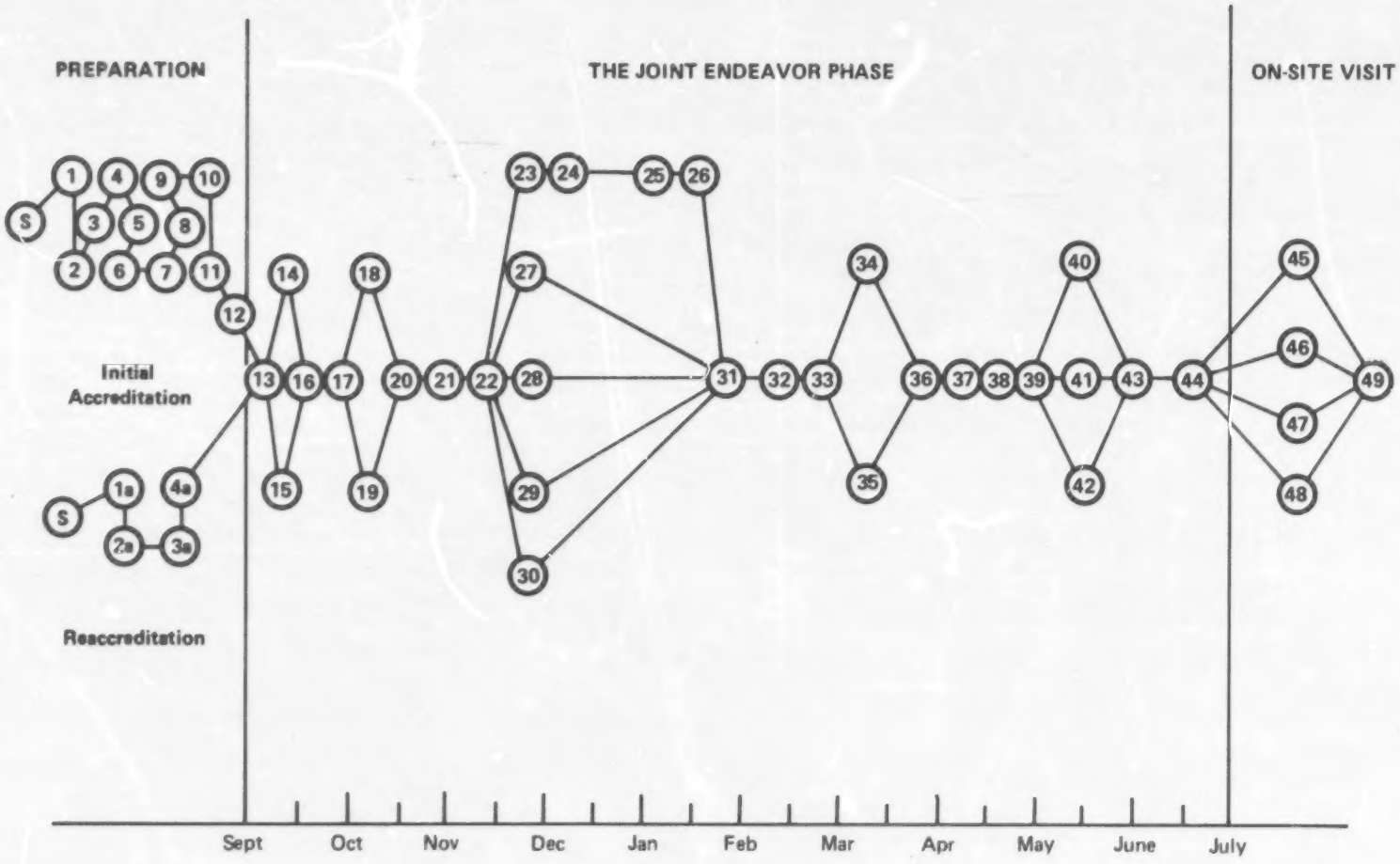

Figure 2. Suggested PERT for Two-year Postsecondary Accreditation Self-Study Process

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